

IMPERIALISM

BY C. DE THIERRY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY W. E. HENLEY



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IMPERIALISM

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BY C. DE THIERRY

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

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'We must respect the Future.'

JACQUES CARTIER



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TO
THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE
IN ADMIRATION OF
ITS PRINCIPLES, ITS AIMS
AND ITS EFFECTS

C. DE T.

31st *May* 1898

ADVERTISEMENT

EMPIRES are slow to learn. But it would seem that, at last, after years of stupor—years in which the blind were content to be led by the insane—the British Empire is by way of realising the fact that it is the greatest and the strongest which the world has seen. More: that return to consciousness has been followed by the reflection that to be great the British Empire must be strong, lest her greatness leave her: that, being great, it behoves her—it is a matter of life and death to her—to be at all points armed, at some points at least equal to the chances of assault, and at as many points as may be invulnerable. And with this reflection—(the wonder is that it should ever have

been anything but a commonplace in the national philosophy)—we English have been recaptured by certain influences whose hold we had, or seemed to have, escaped. We had waxed fat, and we had learned to feel a kind of pride in getting kicked. We were bloated with peace, and believed, or made believe to believe, that, so far as we were concerned, war, being a costly business and one most ruinous to trade, suburban amenities, and the smiling self-complacency which comes of the consciousness of virtue and a pleasing pass-book, had no more terrors for us: for that it had passed for ever from our tale of ways and means.

All that has changed. We have renewed our old pride in the Flag, our old delight in the thought of a good thing done by a good man of his hands, our old faith in the ambitions and traditions of the race. I doubt, for instance, if, outside politics (and, perhaps, the Stock Exchange), there be a single Englishman who does

not rejoice in the triumph of Mr. Rhodes : even as I believe that there is none, inside or out of politics, who does not feel the prouder for his kinship with Sir Herbert Kitchener. And the reason is on the surface. To the national conscience, drugged so long and so long bewildered and bemused, such men as Rhodes and Kitchener are heroic Englishmen. The one has added some hundreds of thousands of square miles to the Empire, and is neck-deep in the work of consolidating that he has got, and of taking more. The other is wiping out the great dishonour that overtook us at Khartoum, at the same time that he is 'reaching down from the north' to Buluwayo, and preparing the way of them that will change a place of skulls into a province of peace. Both are great ; and that is much. But both are, after all, but types ; and that is more. We know now, Mr. Kipling aiding, that all the world over are thousands of the like temper, the like capacity for govern-

ment, the like impatience of anarchy ; and that all the world over, these—each one according to his vision and his strength—are doing Imperial work at Imperial wages : the chance of a nameless death, the possibility of distinction, the certainty that the effect is worth achieving, and will surely be achieved.

This is no new thing. It has been with us since Elizabeth and her lieges set the little Kingdom in the way of accomplishing its destiny. But Clive cut his throat, Hastings was tried for his life, Sir Bartle Frere—what did we make of him? These are but three, and the story of each is typical of many stories besides. But of these I will say no more. It is better to insist, as I do insist, that, in our present temper, no more such martyrdoms are possible : this, though the latest be but a few years old. For, the truth is, we at home have never known ourselves so well, nor so clearly realised our destiny, as now ; and, for the first time since the dead

Pitt conquered at Waterloo, we stand four-square to all the winds of chance and time and fate. The Minister who essayed to famish the Services would find no following now. We have made our Navy the greatest ever made—though not yet great enough, we think, for the work in front of it. Our Army, ridiculously depleted, is bettering and getting more efficient year by year, and we are resolved that the bettering shall go on, and the efficiency shall be increased, as increase it should. We are still, of course, a prey to catchwords: so that our Exports dwindle, and our Imports wax, to the joy of what is left of the Cobden Club; while that admirable breed of fighting men which works our Fleet, and wins our wars, is still—thanks to the action of a few old women of both sexes: mostly dead now, but for all that devilishly alive—compelled to be a misery to itself and a source of peril to the race. But Manchester has had its day; and we know it.

Lord Beaconsfield's message has come down to us in all its pregnancy; and we realise its meaning. The logic of circumstances has been too much for us; and we have understood. In '84 we signed the London Convention, and, at the cost of our very greatest and most useful life, we gave the Soudan back to barbarism. In '98 we won the fight on the Atbara, and exonerated Mr. Rhodes. And the difference between England in '84 and England in '98 is as the difference between a man hocussed and a man with all his wits.

That we had lost, in fact, we have found. We have found our lost selves, and we have found our lost—or well-nigh lost—Colonies. I scarce know which is the greater recovery.

‘ We’ve drunk to the Queen—God bless her !
We’ve drunk to our mothers’ land,
We’ve drunk to our English brother
(But he does not understand).

Thus the great living Laureate of Imperialism

and, in the verses which I have italicised, he says in little what Mr. de Thierry says at length in the—to me—remarkable chapters which follow this *Advertisement*. It is not so very many years ago, in effect, that we knew so little of our Colonies, and had eaten so copiously of ‘the insane root that takes the reason prisoner,’ that we wanted to cut those Colonies—Canada, Cape Colony, New Zealand, the Australias—adrift, and face forth into the future the little folk of Islanders we began. That, as I take it, is all over now. Mr. de Thierry shows that our salvation lay not in ourselves, besotted with shibboleths and bedevilled with such a morality as never made a trader successful much less a nation great, but in our Colonies. We, or those that ruled us, would have cast them loose. They, ‘whose bones were made in England,’ declined, though sorely angered, to so much as enter the gates of the Fool’s Paradise in which our rulers lived. Against this policy of suicide they pro-

tested ; the hour came, and the man was there to meet it ; and the Theory of Dismemberment predeceased its greatest and most ardent advocate by many years. The 'English brother' has at last been got to 'understand,' and he is beginning to realise that it is for him to divine and formulate the spell which is to make our vast and scattered Empire one in fact as it is one in sentiment, one in practice as it is one in blood and speech and theory and name.

To do that is the work of a great man ; and, even among us Anglo-Normans, empire-builders, masters of the earth, as we are, the Great Man is none too common. Let him come now, and he will find his materials ready to his hand. We are not one of the 'dying nations,' we ! Our tradition is alive once more ; our capacities are infinite. Meanwhile, though the process of uniting have begun, we are not yet a united Empire. But, come the Great Man or not, it is certain that the four corners of the world

would rise to arms at the report of an assault upon England. Such an assault is always well within the bounds of probability. In the end it is a certainty; for it is written, or so it seems, that the world is for one of two races, and of these the English is one. Let us English, then, consolidate—consolidate—and still consolidate. History repeats itself. And, in proportion as we ‘respect the future,’ accordingly as we are found prepared for the inevitable Pharsalia, so shall the question, which of the twain shall come forth Cæsar, be answered.

W. E. H.

IMPERIALISM

I

IF the Royal Pageant of '97 was surpassed in gorgeousness by the Field of the Cloth of Gold, and in Oriental splendour by the Coronation of Nicholas II. at Moscow, it remains unique in history for its vast political significance. Originally designed to honour the Sovereign, and to make concrete to Englishmen, both at home and abroad, the magnificent expansion of her dominions in the sixty years of her reign, it became the medium in which the aspirations of a race first found fitting expression. Unlike any other pageant of the kind, it developed from a great spectacle into the embodiment of a great principle. Impregnated with the passion of a united people, it brought forth the sentiment of nationality, and the British Empire ceased to deserve the sneer of those detractors who would describe it as 'a mere geographical position.' In

the heyday of cosmopolitanism, as distinct from patriotism, Lord Palmerston declared that 'steam bridged the Channel.' This was a great achievement, no doubt; but, from the Imperial point of view, it has since been dwarfed by one far greater. The genius of Watt gave Her Majesty's widely sundered realms the continuity denied them by nature. The stormy Atlantic, the illimitable expanse of the Pacific, the lonely waste of the Southern Ocean, are bridged by the fleets of English ships which ceaselessly traverse them. By means of a line of boats on the Hellespont, Xerxes made Europe and Asia one; by means of her Navy and her Mercantile Marine, England unites a world. But, despite the cheap philosophy of what may be called the commercial school of thought, neither steam nor the telegraph-wire does much to advance the cause of the brotherhood of man. The real bond of union between the Mother Country and her Colonies is, and always has been, a loyalty based on a common origin, a common history, and a common allegiance; and the lever, which is to remove the difficulties placed in the path of Empire by nature, time, and diversity of interests, will be found in British hearts. 'By

faith ye shall remove mountains' is as true now as it was in the dawning of Christianity. Inspired by the word, England has reached the second milestone on her Imperial journey, and to falter now would mean nothing less than abdication among the nations. Should she, as she will, keep on in the light by which she has hitherto been guided, a new era will open out before her, eclipsing in moral and material grandeur all others in time.

If the Royal Pageant was symbolical of a United Empire, the Jubilee celebrations as a whole were not less significant. They demonstrated beyond dispute the existence of two political factors of the first magnitude. One is the commanding influence of the Queen on all the 'peoples, nations, and languages' over which she rules; the other is the mighty awakening of the Imperial spirit in these Islands. Time was when the Prime Minister represented England in the eyes of the world. But since the ship of State has come to be guided by a captain, whose master is a shifting majority, and manned with officers and a crew who scout obedience, the councils of Europe, which trembled at the name of a Chatham, a Pitt,

or a Canning, have learned to ignore their successors, and, on occasion, to treat them with contempt. By exercising a sound political insight, Continental Sovereigns and Statesmen have come to recognise the majesty of England in the only element of the Constitution which the modern iconoclast has left untouched. The Crown is a quantity in European affairs as certain as the British Cabinet is uncertain. To ripe judgment, sagacity, and decision, the Queen adds an unrivalled knowledge of political history since the beginning of her reign. She was a Statesman when the Tsar and the Kaiser were in their cradles, and when the Emperor Francis Joseph took the helm of Austro-Hungary; she was experienced when the Kings of Belgium, Denmark, and Sweden succeeded to their thrones; and to-day the Kings of Italy and Greece, the Queens-Regent of Spain and Holland, and all the responsible Ministers of existing Cabinets are pupils in the school of which she is a master. More potent still is her political influence as the revered kinswoman of nearly all the Royal Houses of Europe. With what infinite tact she has played her part the whole world knows. While one of her Ministers

was embittering the feeling of the North against England, on the outbreak of the American Civil War, by hailing the South as a nation, while others of the Cabinet were falling asleep over their duties as the responsible authorities of a neutral Power, *she* was doing her utmost in the cause of peace. The blunders of her Government cost the country three million pounds; her tact smoothed away the menace of the *Trent* affair. Again, in '75 her influence was used to noble purpose in averting a second Franco-Prussian War. Since when, how many times have Englishmen had cause to be grateful that the personality of their Sovereign is more potent in the world than either British statesmanship or British diplomacy?

But if the Queen is a power abroad, in her own dominions she is a force which it is impossible to over-estimate. Foreigners, indeed, pay her homage; but her own subjects regard her with a devotion whose intensity makes it akin to a passion. In her they recognise the sole remaining Constitutional link between England and her Colonies: the Great White Mother, the fame of whose virtue has won the loyalty of native races as the genius of an Alexander or a

Napoleon never could have done. The secret of her unique position is also the secret of the expansion of her Empire; and so there was a peculiar fitness in the honour paid to both as if they were one. Other thrones have been filled by Sovereigns, who were the objects of a people's devotion, who were great and wise rulers, or who were admirable as wife, mother, and queen. But has any previous age been adorned by a Royal Lady who was all these, as well as an empire-builder second to none? Or has Time, since first he knew civilisation on the banks of the Nile, done reverence before to the Head of a State whose personal character linked a heterogeneous people in the bonds of love? It is this supremacy of the moral principle in English rule which gave the Pageant of June its peculiar suggestiveness. It was a triumph—the first since Rome sank, never to rise again, under the weight of barbarian hordes. But it was to the Temple of Jehovah the procession went, not to the Temple of Jupiter; its moving spirit was liberty, not despotism; its glory the glory of peace, not of war. Since the wise men saw the star in the East, Christianity has found no nobler expression; and it was in entire harmony with all our

ideas of the fitness of things that it should have not only rivalled but surpassed the most imposing triumphs of the Pagan world. Rome was never mistress of territories to be compared to the British Empire, nor able to command the allegiance of races so diverse as those who people it. And it is not in size and variety alone that English dominion is unique. Its crowning glory is its freedom. The Protectorates and the Tributary States, the Crown Colonies and the self-governing Provinces, of which it is constituted, sent princes and nobles, premiers and officers, cavalry and infantry, to swell the triumph of the Queen and the Imperial idea, not in obedience to a command, behind which was the force of victorious legions, but to give expression to their own enthusiastic loyalty. That is to say, the greatest Imperial spectacle on record had its origin in those silken ties which bind together the various parts of the Empire represented in it. All the dominant races have raised themselves monuments, but none a monument so noble and inspiring as the English. A world-wide dominion, whose foundations are laid deep in the national character, is an achievement of which the gods themselves might be proud.

Without doubt the stability of the Crown has largely contributed to the growth of the Imperial sentiment. Since the Queen's accession the destinies of England have been intrusted to seventeen successive Administrations (including the present Coalition Government), ten Premiers, and thirty Colonial Secretaries. Some were enthusiasts, some were doctrinaires, some were slaves to the immediate, and some were statesmen. No two of them pursued the same policy, and so, though of late years all except one have agreed to do nothing in Imperial affairs which might safely be left undone, each has achieved his object in a different way. In a feverish search for the elixir of social, political, and commercial life, the art of government has been lost. Human nature, existing conditions, the future, have all been forgotten by Nineteenth Century economists, as true religion was forgotten by the churchmen of the Italian Renaissance. The Queen, being swayed by no considerations other than those which alone should influence the actions of statesmen, is thus steady as a rock amongst shifting sands. England sees in her, as it saw in George III., a bulwark against the selfishness, the insincerity, the never-ending strife of

the Conservative and Radical Parties: the Empire at large, the only Estate of the Realm to which it owes obedience. A few weeks before the outbreak of hostilities between the American Colonies and the Mother Country, Franklin voiced the sentiments of Colonials for all time:—‘The sovereignty of the Crown I understand,’ he said. ‘The sovereignty of the British Legislature out of Britain I do not understand. . . . We are free subjects of the King, and fellow-subjects of one part of his dominions are not superiors over fellow-subjects in any other part.’ This principle underlies the whole history of British expansion. Colonials from a long and varied experience have learned to place little reliance on the good faith of either party in the State; but the Queen has always had their fullest confidence. Bewildered by the number of men and ideas which have held the political stage during the past sixty years, they have naturally turned to that element in the Constitution which, unchanged and unchanging, has never been reached by the roaring tide of progress and reform. The Queen alone can look at a question of State with impartial eyes; she alone can appeal to the whole nation; she alone is above the temptation to sacrifice principle

to a powerful minority. Her judgment is not warped by the fear of losing office, nor is her conscience dulled by the work of trying to square her convictions with the teaching of Richard Cobden. And it is this disinterested influence at the head of affairs, which has been deprived of its proper function by a House of Commons, whose ineptitude and lack of restraint are growing more conspicuous every year.

II

The significance of the Queen's position is, however, an old story. That of Imperialism is, comparatively speaking, new : therefore it is the more vitally interesting to the race. The spirit entranced for nearly seventy years, and half asleep for ten, has fully awakened at the call of its kindred from over seas, and reveals itself with all its old power. Will it breathe fresh life into the Imperial idea to Federation? or will it be crushed into insensibility again by the dead weight of the materialism of the time? Men too often forget, in their zeal for Anglo-Saxon unity, that Colonial loyalty and Imperialism are not

one and the same thing, and that English Imperialism, as we know it, is a growth of yesterday. Hence their impatience at the slow progress of the race towards the fulfilment of its manifest destiny. But if they would reason only from facts instead of from their own desires, they would find that such a rate of advance is perfectly normal. Imagination is not a quality for which the average Briton is distinguished. He is too apt to act on the assumption that his attitude towards a great question is the attitude of the Empire in general, and so he talks most complacently of the 'growing enthusiasm of the Colonies for the Imperial idea during the last year or two,' not because it is true of them but because it is true of him. As matter of fact Imperialism has been developing in Canada since the Confederation Act of '67, in Australia since French and German activities became pronounced in the South Pacific, and in South Africa since the advent of Mr. Rhodes. To confound it with loyalty is another common mistake. Imperialism is an instinct as well as a sentiment: loyalty is a pure sentiment, which circumstance has developed into a passion. The one is born of the head, is stimulated by interest, is insepar-

able from action; the other is born of the heart, is swayed only by feeling, and, while a noble influence in the political world, is incapable of generating those progressive forces which are necessary to the continuance of an Empire. It has enormous cohesive power, it can even adapt itself to new conditions; but it cannot impel. Unlike Imperialism, it is an expression peculiar to the Colonies, having so little in common with British loyalty, except reverence for the Queen, as to be denied the name. In the very nature of things England has never been, and never will be, able to respond to it. The reason is clear enough to any one who admits that an Englishman abroad is something more than a buyer of Manchester cottons and Bradford woollens. In whatever part of the Empire he may settle, he is an exile: a fortunate exile it may be, but still an exile. He knows quite well that the new country gives him of the good things of this life as the old never could; that, in a material sense, emigration has made him a prince, whereas contentment at home might have made him a pauper. But if the conditions do not admit of his weeping by the waters, or hanging his harp on the willows, his heart goes out to his native land across the seas,

as the heart of the Jew in Babylon went out to Zion. Should he be a commonplace man, this is the best side of his nature in connexion with the outside world, and in no way does it reflect on his affection for the country of his adoption. True, it is likely in the course of years to lose its present lover-like intensity, and, with the union of Britain and her Colonies, in the form of Federation, to wander further and further into the deserts of matter-of-fact. But, even were it to disappear altogether, it will always be remembered with gratitude for the noble part it played at a critical period of our Imperial history. When the Mother Country was groping in the darkness of Little-Englandism, intent only on dismembering the glorious dominion the energy and self-sacrifice of our forefathers enabled us to build up, the Colonies, by the light of their loyalty, undeviatingly held on their way, and thus kept open the road to a united Empire; by means of its strength they saved her from committing Imperial suicide; and by its contagious enthusiasm they awakened the old Imperial spirit in a powerful minority of her public men. A sentiment—yes! But a sentiment whose services to the Anglo-Saxon race will be honoured when

many triumphs of science, practical statesmanship, and political thought have been forgotten, or have fallen into contempt. It is only too probable that the England of this latter half of the Nineteenth Century will not hold the high place in the estimation of posterity which she has persuaded herself is her due. She will not, as she appears to think, be remembered for her progressive zeal, or her scientific discoveries, or any of those hundred-and-one material victories in which she takes such pride, but as the England of Mr. Gladstone, Earl Granville, and Sir William Harcourt : the England, that is, which returned a Minister to power who had broken the most sacred pledges given to British and native subjects in the Transvaal, lowered the national repute in every corner of the globe, and betrayed to death the most chivalrous soldier of the Nineteenth Century. The Colonies, on the contrary, are likely to be given a niche in history more honourable than they have any idea of claiming and their contemporaries have any idea of conceding. It was they who kept alight the sacred fire when the Mother Country was doing her utmost to put it out.

As there is nothing which is less appreciated

than uninvited love, Colonial loyalty was, until lately, the butt of Radical sneers. It was 'based on self-interest,' was the cry; and, curiously enough, none were louder than those who would sacrifice the Colonies to Mammon—so ready is lust to impute its own motives to the genuine sentiment which stands in its way! Such a charge could only be brought by men, whose own hearts had never echoed to the music of early associations wafted over half a world, or thrilled at a chance incident recalling the long ago. If Colonial loyalty were not spontaneous, if it were not an emotion which lay at the very root of Colonial being, it would have no practical value. Only because it works unconsciously has it given the tone to public thought, and pervaded the whole fabric of Colonial life. The feeling stimulated by the enormous advantages to each segment arising out of the wealth and power and splendour of a united Empire—in other words self-interest—is Imperialism. It, however, is of comparatively speaking recent development in the Colonies: loyalty is coeval with them. On whatever spot of the earth's surface a body of Englishmen settles under the shelter of the British flag, fidelity to the traditions, the institutions, and the Imperial

destiny of the Mother Country will be found growing with their growth and strengthening with their strength. This is affection, says the political student—not loyalty. True; but in the Colonies they are so nearly one as to be undistinguishable.

Thus it is, as many critics have pointed out in varying degrees of kindness, that the dominant sentiment in Colonial life has its origin in hearts which beat their tenderest to the echoes they hear from the old home thousands of miles away. And, in spite of doleful warnings, it shows no signs of weakening with the increasing numbers of native-born. On the contrary, it has visibly strengthened. But in the nature of things it will not be permanent. Having served its purpose in the progress of the Empire towards consolidation, it will gradually be merged in Imperialism. As a sentiment it has been precious; as a sentiment leavened by self-interest it will be invincible by any outside influence which may be brought against it. Like gold, it must have an alloy before it can be thoroughly useful. But none will ever be found to regret the days of its impeccable purity. It was well that Imperialism should be born of a noble sentiment rather than

of selfishness or the lust of power, and well that Colonial materialism should be moulded by an idealising force.

III

To speak of English and Colonial Imperialism as one and the same is incorrect. Though they work towards a similar end, their origins are entirely different. Loyalty, as we know it, is an expression of feeling entirely unknown in England, and naturally, as she is its object. To her the Colonies turn in thought as the Mohammedan turns to Mecca; and, this being so, Imperialism at home has not the basis of passion which it has in the Empire at large. It is truly described as the awakening of the old Imperial spirit of the nation; but it must be remembered that Colonials, too, are descended of the men who made possible a Trafalgar and a Waterloo, and that, since the rise of the Manchester School, it can scarce be maintained that they have been less true to the traditions of Raleigh and Blake, of Chatham and Nelson, than the Mother Country. To deny them the Imperial spirit is to deny that there is

an Empire. Still, if English Imperialism cannot claim a monopoly of the one, which has built up the other, nor respond to Colonial loyalty, it has an unique character of its own. Behind it is the strength generated by a thousand years of effort, the prodigious forces an unparalleled development of energy has brought into being. It has a great past and a sense of responsibility for the future. It has poetry and romance and richness of setting. Above all, it has a lively appreciation of the claims of kinship, and a deep, if silent, determination to keep for the Anglo-Saxon race whatever the Anglo-Saxon race has won.

Those members of Parliament and other responsible persons, who were wont to describe Colonial loyalty as actuated by the most sordid motives, have yet to be heard on the origin of their own and their fellow-countrymen's Imperialism. Can they maintain for a moment that it has been stimulated by pure affection? Even the most cursory observer of contemporary history knows how very far this is from the truth, and, unconsciously, thinking men admit as much. English Imperialism has been quickened by outside pressure, by the sudden realisation of Britain's isolation in the world, by a growing suspicion

that Free Trade has served its turn ; and this is as it should be. An Empire, like a nation, must be united by a community of interests and the necessity for mutual defence : by a common ideal and a common allegiance. Sentiment alone will never develop nationality. It is the slowly wrought result of action, of conflicting forces, of mutual sorrows and mutual triumphs. In short, its story is one of individual character. And thus far it has not made the progress which it might and should.

The most enthusiastic supporters of modern Imperialism cannot contend that it dates back further than twenty-five years. As a recognised national movement it is only thirteen years old. Thanks to the popularity of the Manchester School amongst the educated classes, and the influence of Sir James Stephen on the official world, a belief gained ground during the Sixties that English commerce was hampered by the possession of Colonies, so that the country would be infinitely stronger and richer without them. This, known to history as the Dismemberment Craze, was aptly described by a shrewd American as 'the ass-born policy of the British Government.' Never had the national

spirit sunk so low. Liberals and Conservatives, peers and commoners, statesmen and budding politicians, all were victims of the same madness. But it was not until the appearance of the terrible Earl Granville that it began to declare itself in earnest. The cordial relations now existing between the Mother Country and the Colonies are, we are told, entirely due to the Liberal Policy of Self-Government. This may or may not be, as the term 'policy' is understood; but it is rather curious, to say the least, that at no time in their history were the Colonies worse contented than in the Sixties and early Seventies, when nearly all were the proud possessors of the Radical panacea for political and social ills. This also was entirely due to the Liberal policy; but one hears very little about it. In '48, owing to another development of the Liberal policy—Free Trade—a small knot of citizens in Montreal openly favoured annexation to the United States; but because Canada was loyal to the marrow, as she has always been, the movement died a natural death. With Earl Granville at the Colonial Office, it started again on the basis of Independence. At a particularly critical time the Imperial troops were withdrawn, and

the Dominion was given to understand that the sooner she parted company with the Mother Country the better Her Majesty's Ministers would be pleased. That this is no exaggeration is proved by Earl Granville's letter to Sir Alexander, then Mr., Galt. Mr. Galt had been offered a knighthood, and, fearing that his well-known opinions on a policy 'framed with a reference to that which appeared to him inevitable, the separation of the Dominion from Great Britain,' would be a bar to his acceptance, he had, at the request of the Governor, Sir John Young, made his position perfectly clear in writing. With Dismemberment rampant at the Colonial Office, his fears were groundless. In the Canadian Parliament of February 1870, he said:—'Holding these views, and reserving to himself the right to state them in public, he felt that he must not accept the distinction that was offered to him unless His Excellency would be allowed to convey his (Sir Alexander's) opinion to Her Majesty's Government, and that if he learned that Her Majesty's Government would be pleased to confer the honour, he would be extremely grateful for it, and would accept it; but that if, on the other hand, they felt that there was anything in the

views he entertained which ought to forbid its being conferred, he would accept the decision and acquiesce in the propriety of it. He was not at liberty to give the words of the answer, but they could judge from the facts that the decision was confirmative, and, therefore, if there was anything in his position which was *offensive to the loyalty of the honourable gentlemen*, all he could say was simply this—that *he stood on the same ground as the Ministers of the Crown in England!*’ As an isolated instance, this might have passed without remark; but it was one of many, all tending in the same direction, and Canadian loyalty began to take alarm. The excuse for the withdrawal of the Imperial troops was characteristic of the men who made it: a concentration of forces was needed for the defence of the Mother Country! But to attain this end, Colonists asked curiously, was it necessary to disband the Canadian Rifles, the West Indian regiments, the Cape Rifles, and the Ceylon Rifles? And if not, why were they disbanded? Even more ominous was the strength of the conspiracy, whose headquarters were in New York. Among its members were such distinguished Canadians as Sir Alexander Galt, the

Hon. John Young, the Hon. L. S. Huntington, who favoured independence; with English separatists and American statesmen, who favoured annexation. Immediately before a meeting in '69, 'assurances were received from their friends in England that *the Gladstone Cabinet could be depended upon to carry out the policy of independence.*' And later in the year 'positive assurances were forwarded to Canada, *by friends who could speak semi-officially*, that the English Administration had resolved on the following programme with regard to Canada:—1. The withdrawal of the Imperial forces. 2. The cessation of Imperial guarantee. 3. The declaration of the independence of Canada at the earliest possible moment.' The first two were duly carried out, and the last was only prevented by the rising tide of public opinion at home. But the intentions of Mr. Gladstone's Government are not to be mistaken: confirmed as they were by the fatal Treaty of Washington, and by British indifference to the Fenian raids.

In Victoria, Mr., now Sir Gavan, Duffy saw the drift of Earl Granville's new policy earlier than any of his contemporaries. It was he who called into being the Committee, afterwards

transformed into a Royal Commission, which practically recommended the disintegration of the Empire. But as the movement was nipped in the bud at home, it had no chance of fructifying in the Colonies, and so the Report of the Commissioners, inspired by an Irish political exile, was forgotten almost as soon as it was published.

If the Imperial troops were withdrawn from Australia, Canada, and the Cape Colony, with no regard for Colonial sentiment, the circumstances attending their withdrawal from New Zealand will for ever remain a blot on the 'scutcheon of the Liberal Party. Earl Granville not only left the country defenceless in the midst of a native war: he actually recommended the authorities at Wellington to *acknowledge the sovereignty of a Maori Chief!* Could cynical indifference to the first principles of Empire go further? When his insolent despatches had raised the drooping hopes of the natives, and so made peace more difficult than ever, his cold contempt for their misfortunes dispirited the already severely tried settlers; his ostentatious anxiety to be rid of them and their Colony chilled their loyalty; and some leading men

began to consider the advisability of a union with the United States. That the Government at Washington would have refused, no one who has the slightest acquaintance with American history can honestly believe. As an astute Yankee diplomatist remarked :—‘The United States is watching, and, I guess, will pick up everything you let drop.’ Happily, however, public opinion in England awoke in time; and thus far the Republic has profited only by the weakness of English statesmen, not by the disloyalty of English colonists. Four times has the surface of the sea of Colonial loyalty been disturbed by a ripple of treason, and every ripple has been caused by a puff of Liberal wind.

IV

To deny that the Dismemberment Craze ever found favour with the Liberal Party, as many Radicals are fond of doing, is to deny the written testimony of Sir Henry Taylor, Sir James Stephen, and Sir Frederick Rogers, and the public acts and speeches of Mr. Monsell, Mr. Cardwell, Sir Charles Adderley, Earl Granville, Lord Kimberley, and Mr. Gladstone. As matter of fact,

the evidence both at home and abroad was overwhelming. In October '69, Earl Grey wrote to *The Times*, in answer to a letter of the 26th August, signed by three Colonials:—‘The breaking up of the great Colonial Empire of England would, in my opinion, be a calamity to the Colonies, to this country, and to the world, and I cannot doubt that you are right in believing this to be the result which must be looked for from the policy distinctly declared by Her Majesty’s Government.’ Sir George Grey, then in England, Sir Charles Clifford, late Speaker of the Legislative Assembly in New Zealand, and others, protested publicly against the tone and matter of Earl Granville’s reckless despatch on New Zealand affairs (October '69), ‘as fraught with danger,’ and ‘calculated to drive the Colony out of the Empire.’ The Fox Ministry described the Earl’s innovations as the fruit of the ‘policy of the Imperial Government towards New Zealand since the accession of Mr. Gladstone to office,’ which ‘evidently contemplated the disruption of the Empire.’ Mr. Justice Richmond declared from the judicial bench, that ‘it had now become impossible to carry out the ordinary law in the ordinary way in the North Island. . . .

If we were to be burdened with the responsibilities of independence, we should also be permitted to enjoy its powers.' Mr. Firth, a well-known Colonist, in commenting on these remarks, wrote that Colonials contemplated a rupture with the Mother Country only as 'a bitter and cruel necessity,' inspired by the Imperial policy of abandonment. If Her Majesty's new advisers should adhere to it, then 'Rome would not be the only Empire to teach the world that the decay of national spirit is but the precursor of the decay of national power.' Sir George Bowen, the Governor, in forwarding this letter to Earl Granville, wrote that he was 'informed Mr. Firth's opinions are also expressed by a large portion of the Press and the general public.' And the Colonial Secretary's mischievous energies were not confined to Colonies in the true sense of the term. France wanted the Gambia, a West African possession, which paid ten thousand pounds a year in salaries to English officials, besides two thousand pounds a year in pensions, and could boast of a surplus revenue; and Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues were only too glad to oblige a friendly Government by giving up a slice of English territory. But their in-

tentions were discovered, and Parliament insisted on an explanation. 'The Gambia,' said the Duke of Manchester, in the House of Lords, 'was the best river on the western coast of Africa, and he hoped the Government would not, on any account, give up so important a position to France. . . . He was the more anxious on this head, because he feared the projected transfer might be the first step towards abandoning our Colonies.' In effect, the plan was frustrated by the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian War; and the Gambia is still included in the British Empire.

So strong was the feeling for Dismemberment in the official classes that Sir Francis Head, a retired Governor of Canada, wrote to *The Times*:—'Time was when no one louder than myself cried out to our Colonists and to Her Majesty's Government, "Hold fast!" In the particular case, and under the altered circumstances alluded to, I now calmly *counsel both parties to "Let go!"*' *The Times* went further, and gaily recommended British Columbia to enter the Union instead of the Dominion. It also gave its views on Great Britain as the Parent State:—'England is in this sense the Mother

Country of Australia, and just in the same way some other land—without committing ourselves to the quarrels of ethnologists, we may say Schleswig-Holstein—is the Mother Country of England.’ Why not Central Asia at once? ‘If the policy now pursued,’ continued the Ministerial Organ, ‘point, as the circular before us says, to the severance of the connexion between the Colonies and the Mother Country, it is well the end should be foreseen and provided for, so that it be not at last achieved hurriedly and in an unfriendly spirit.’ To a deputation of Colonials, whose spokesman, Mr. Wilson, ‘referring to the policy of the Government in the Colonies, and the belief that it was intended to effect an early disruption of the Colonial Empire, confessed that “such a policy struck the Colonists with dismay, but if it really was intended, Colonists should have timely notice of it,”’ Earl Granville could only reply with polite evasions, though he did bring himself to say that he should ‘be sorry if England lost her Colonies.’ This his hearers understood to mean that the Ministry would be pleased when the last of England’s possessions had cut the cable. As belittled by the breath of such a ruler, those

possessions appeared of less account than the obsolete ships of the British Fleet.

At the Inauguration Banquet of the Royal Colonial Institute, Mr. Gladstone and other members of the Ministry, including Earl Granville, were forced to dissemble their real sentiments, and to profess a most fervent devotion to 'the great and noble tradition of the unity of the British race.' But Colonists were not deceived by this astounding *volte-face*. Sir Charles Nicholson, for many years Speaker of the Legislative Council in Sydney, 'deprecated the mischievous speculators who would have a severance of the Colonies from the Parent State.' Sir Charles Clifford assured the distinguished audience that, to retain the sympathy of Colonials, 'their feelings should not be maligned.' Mr. Reverdy Johnson, the American Minister, proved that he, too, was well aware of the true inwardness of the situation. With the diplomatic tact peculiar to his countrymen, he informed his amazed and uncomfortable hosts that 'it was possible some of the Colonies which now flourished under the dominion of Her Majesty . . . might in process of time find themselves under the Stars and Stripes, which

coloured the flag of the United States.' If Mr. Reverdy Johnson made a mistake, who was responsible for it? In the same spirit, the Queen's representative at the Cape publicly assured the assembly that 'in North America we have unmistakable indications of the rapid establishment of a powerful independent State. In Australia it is probable that its several settlements . . . will see their way to a similar coalition. In New Zealand the severance is being accomplished under very painful circumstances.' Who was responsible for this also? *The Spectator*, the sole Liberal organ of the day which maintained a patriotic attitude on the question, told us very plainly that it was Mr. Gladstone. When public opinion declared itself unmistakably, the Colonies were asked to understand that 'the British Government has really been converted at a critical moment; that it has been converted by the most impressive of all arguments—the argument that the people of England . . . are thoroughly hostile to a policy of Colonial disintegration.' Later, when Lord Granville was transferred to the Foreign Office, to destroy British *prestance* in the eyes of the world as he had almost succeeded in destroying it in the eyes of the Empire, *The*

Spectator sighed with relief to see him quit his department 'before any Colony had declared at once its independence and its undying hostility to Great Britain. It was a very near thing indeed . . . English people do not pay taxes that their country may become a third-rate Power.'

v

With history entirely against Lord Rosebery, it is passing strange that he came to make that 'amazing' speech of his at the National Liberal Club in the July of '97. A luncheon given to Colonial Premiers by the remnants of the Radical Party, with Mr. Labouchere as vice-chairman, supported by Lord Ripon, Sir William Harcourt, Lord Kimberley—the last two doing their best to tune their voices to the unfamiliar Imperial lay, —could not fail to be suggestive, and, in political significance, could only be rivalled by a dinner given by the Boers to the Uitlanders, with Judge Gregorowski in the vice-chair, supported by Dr. Leyds and President Kruger, swearing eternal friendship to the English cause. The mantle of Imperialism sits on a Little-Englander about as well as the mantle of peace and good-will sits on

a Hollander. But even more surprising than the presence of the Radical Chiefs on such an occasion was the speech of Lord Rosebery, with Lord Carrington, the Chairman, the only one of the speakers who could describe himself as a genuine Imperialist. That most popular of Colonial Governors, in proposing the toast of 'The Queen,' struck a national note, which was loyally echoed by Lord Kimberley and Sir William Harcourt. Lord Rosebery, however, rose superior to the best traditions of Party Politics. 'It is somewhat remarkable,' he said, 'that so much of the speeches that have been made has been devoted to the vindication of the Liberal Party as being connected with the Imperial movement. I do not think that that vindication is particularly necessary.' When Lord Rosebery indulges in a statement of this kind, he should be surrounded only by faithful adherents, whose knowledge of Imperial history might more properly be described as ignorance, not by experienced Colonials, who knew Mr. Gladstone as an enemy to the Empire before the flower of the Liberal Party saw in him an enemy to the Union. Perhaps Lord Rosebery was thinking of the Whig Party. At this time and in this place,

he should have remembered that both Liberals and Conservatives, by changing their names, have tacitly admitted their own unworthiness to carry on the great traditions of their respective parties. The Liberals by becoming Radicals have, unfortunately for themselves, done more: they have broken away from the mighty past so completely as to dishonour it. Between the Whigs, led by Chatham, and the Radicals, led by Mr. Gladstone, lies a century of effort to keep England isolated from the world: between the Tories, led by Pitt, and the Conservatives, led by Lord Beaconsfield, lie the dark ages of Imperial History. With the loss of the American Colonies both Parties in the State lost the secret of a sound Colonial Policy, and it was rediscovered after much travail only by the Colonies themselves. Neither the Liberal Party nor the Radical Party has ever been connected with the Imperial movement. None of the Liberal or Radical leaders, with two such notable exceptions as Lord Rosebery himself and the late Mr. Forster, have been, or are, pillars of the Empire, and in the Radical rank and file Imperialists are too innumerable to be a power. But if Liberalism has been barren of efforts to cement

the Empire, it has been prolific enough in such attempts at dismemberment as Free Trade, the Belgian Treaty of '63 and the German Treaty of '67, the Abandonment Policy of Mr. Gladstone, the Home Rule Bill of '86, and Little-Englandism.

'One amazing orator the other day,' continued Lord Rosebery, 'went so far as to trace the germ of the Imperial idea to the late Lord Beaconsfield.' This sort of stuff is not what the Empire expects of Lord Rosebery. Why Sir Michael Hicks-Beach should be 'amazing' because he paid a tribute to Lord Beaconsfield's greatest achievement one is at a loss to understand: particularly as his was a tribute which Colonials had rendered to the dead Earl not once but many times. 'Now we have it under Lord Beaconsfield's own signature and seal that he regarded the Colonies as unnecessary and heavy encumbrances, who would hasten to leave us at the shortest notice.' Thus Lord Rosebery. His quotation is exact; *but it occurs in a letter written as early as '52*, which clearly indicates that Disraeli feared the disruption of the Empire. It is the sole scrap of evidence which can be adduced to connect him with the Dismemberment Policy. As his first

speech on Imperialism was not made until '72, there was an interval of twenty years in which his mind lay open to the influences of that eventful period. He saw that whatever treason there was in the Colonies was due to the still greater treason in Downing Street; that, despite their cavalier treatment by Lord Granville, they remained steadily loyal to the Queen and the Imperial connexion; that they entirely repudiated the Dismemberment Policy. Student of human nature as he was, he could not fail to note the recoil of the nation from a doctrine which threatened the very existence of England as a first-rate Power. Came the petition to Her Majesty, signed by over a hundred thousand working men of London, praying that the Colonies might remain integral parts of the Empire; the circular, addressed to the Colonial Governments by three patriotic Colonials, calling for a Conference in London, 'to consider the mutual relations of the Mother Country and the Colonies'; the Cannon Street meetings; the deputation to Lord Granville; the inauguration of the Royal Colonial Institute; and the Conference of '71; and in '72 he made his great speech at the Crystal Palace, and modern Imperialism was

born. Thus, between Lord Rosebery's quotation and Disraeli's first utterance as an Empire-builder, exactly two decades had passed. Compared to the lightning changes to which Mr. Gladstone, Sir William Harcourt, and Mr. Chamberlain have accustomed us, this change is as a growth of centuries.

'The fact is that Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism was mainly European and Asiatic, and it was not as the newer Imperialism is, not merely European and Asiatic, but American, African, and Australasian as well.' If this means anything at all, it means that, as the Liberal Party had put back the clock of Colonial Imperialism for a generation, the only field left open to Lord Beaconsfield was India. How magnificently he worked it all the world knows. The influence of those master-strokes of policy—the adoption by the Queen of the title of Empress, and the summoning of Indian troops to Europe—was felt from Cape Comorin to the Himalayas, and westwards thence to St. Petersburg. In the Peninsula it strengthened loyalty to British rule, producing, ten years later, that unique feature in history, a force voluntarily raised and maintained by tributary States. In Russia it brought home

to the Government the homogeneity of the Empire. Sixteen years have elapsed since the greatest of all modern Imperialists was gathered to his fathers. How much has been done by English statesmen to further what Lord Rosebery calls 'American, African, and Australasian Imperialism'? Almost nothing.

VI

But *was* Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism 'Asiatic'? Let the Colonies speak for themselves. On 29th July '78 a meeting, called together by the Mayor, was held in the Town Hall, Melbourne, to congratulate the English Premier on his success at the Congress of Berlin. The chief speakers were Sir James Service, the Premier of Victoria, Mr. Francis, and Mr. Gaunson, a rising politician of the new generation. *The Argus* hoped 'the meeting would convince the Earl of Beaconsfield and his colleagues of the strength of the Imperial sentiment . . . and help to invigorate the feeling in England in favour of closer union.' At Sydney, a similar meeting was held, the chief speakers being Sir James Martin, the Chief

Justice, Mr., afterwards Sir George, Dibbs, Sir John Hay, President of the Legislative Council, and Sir Saul Samuel, the present Agent-General of New South Wales. In Brisbane the chief speakers were the Hon. H. E. King, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, the Premier, Mr. Douglas, and the leader of the Opposition, Sir Thomas M'Ilwraith. There were also meetings at Adelaide, Perth, Newcastle, Ballarat, and Roma. That is to say, every town of any size in the Australian continent moved that congratulatory telegrams be sent to Lord Beaconsfield, and an illuminated address by the following mail. The miners of New Zealand, the lumbermen of Canada—everywhere throughout the length and breadth of the Empire Colonials met together to do honour to the Minister who had re-established England in her old place among the nations. Has any other English statesman received an address from even one Colonial town congratulating him on an Imperial achievement? Has it not been exactly the reverse?

On the fatal 19th April '81, *The Toronto Weekly Mail* described the dead Earl as 'undoubtedly above all things an Imperialist, and the project at which he once hinted, Imperial

Federation, was one of those dreams which involuntarily flit across a vivid imagination.' He 'loved the Empire, to the service of which he gave the best years of his life,' was the epitaph of *The Evening Times* (Hamilton, Ontario). 'The energy of Lord Beaconsfield found new spheres of action,' said *The Brisbane Courier*, 'and so far each move seems to tend to the more thorough consolidation of the Empire.' 'And though there are those who denounce his tendency towards what has come to be called Imperialism,' said *The Hobart Mercury*, '... he was a man who exerted a gigantic sway over the affairs of the Empire—and a man whose strength either for good or evil will continue to be realised for years to come.' *The Inquirer*, Perth, thought that 'by the death of the Earl of Beaconsfield England lost one of, if not the greatest of the politicians of the Victorian era, and if, at times, the extraordinarily imaginative schemes of the late Earl were not entirely understood by the nation, subsequent events have evidenced the wonderful genius of the man.' *The New Zealand Times* said:—'There cannot be a question that after his late access to power England reasserted her position among the

nations, and once more came to the front in the politics of Europe. . . . He did more to uphold the honour of Great Britain during the last decade than any Premier for many years that have passed.' *The Cape Times* held that 'those who loved him best would say that he was a statesman true to the good old school which made England great and glorious by colonisation and solidification of the Empire. In the Colonies of England his memory will be revered because of his endeavour to stay the cast-adrift policy of the Radicals, whose activity has created a revolutionary element in the State.' Is it not evident that Lord Rosebery's criticism was not less ill-informed than it was ill-timed?

VII

'Imperium et Libertas'

The late Mr. Forster was worthy his great reputation, but it is impossible to concede to him the first place in the Imperial movement, as Lord Rosebery would have us do. His earliest speech on Anglo-Saxon Unity was not made until '75, three years after Mr. Disraeli had declared

the 'maintenance of the Empire' to be one of the great objects of the Tory Party; he never held an office which enabled him to put his ideas into practical shape; he was, comparatively speaking, unknown in the Colonies. To deny that Lord Beaconsfield sowed the seed of modern Imperialism is to challenge the unanswerable question:—Who did? No other English statesman of the Victorian era comes within measurable distance of his achievements; so that to speak of Mr. Forster as a rival is to compare a star and the sun. Lord Rosebery, too, should have remembered that Sir John Seeley's *Expansion of England* did not appear until Lord Beaconsfield had been laid to rest at Hughenden for nearly two years.

That the great Jew, being dead, should yet live is proof sufficient that the nation associates him with the greatness of the Empire. Lord Palmerston, Lord Derby, Sir Robert Peel, and Earl Grey, passed away and were forgotten; Lord John Russell was forgotten in his lifetime. Lord Beaconsfield, alone, is as living to the public mind as he was sixteen years ago, and his influence is one of the main factors in the Imperial history of to-day. To be thus enshrined in the

hearts of his countrymen is one of the grandest tributes which posterity can pay to a statesman, as it is also the most enduring. In an age so little given to reverence, so eager for novelty, and so easily moved by the commercial spirit as our own, the existence of such a sentiment is akin to the marvellous. To seek an explanation of it in the personality of the man, or the romantic sentiment of Primrose Dames, as the Radicals, with their shallow habit of thought, are inclined to do, is the merest weakness. National sentiments are founded not on trifles but on principles, and they grow and flourish in exact proportion to the strength and soundness of their bases. It is because Englishmen recognise more and more clearly, as the years go by, how completely national Lord Beaconsfield's ideals were, that he is taking his place among the immortal few. His reverence for the Constitution and for Parliamentary tradition; his dignified and patriotic attitude as leader of the Opposition; his prescience and foresight—these things none will dispute. But it is not by these things that he lives. His highest claim to the gratitude of the Empire rests on the creative genius which enabled him to breathe the breath of life

into the dry bones of Imperialism. He was the first since Waterloo to point out the glorious destiny of the English race, and to make for the first milestone on the shining road. That he failed must be laid at the door of the English people, who rejected him for Mr. Gladstone. The Jews of old stoned their prophets: the modern Englishman drives his out of office.

It was because of his profound belief in England that Lord Beaconsfield, alone among British Ministers for a generation, was able to inspire enthusiasm wherever the Union Jack proclaims the Queen's supremacy. In the only sense in which it is possible, he was the representative statesman of the Empire—the man who voiced its highest aspirations, and, in a political sense, gave them practical shape. Not since the days of Pitt and Chatham has a civilian reached such a dazzling eminence in the service of his Sovereign. Other British Ministers held the same exalted office, but none was regarded by the self-governing provinces of the Empire with anything warmer than respect, and one at least was heartily distrusted. It was Lord Beaconsfield's glory that he commanded the spontaneous homage of them all. Lord Rosebery was popu-

lar: so popular, indeed, that his advent to the Colonial Office was eagerly anticipated. In him men thought they saw the future Secretary who was to realise the Imperial dream. He never had the chance, and the Empire has since preferred the English people before the politicians of Downing Street. It is, moreover, the strongest condemnation of the Radical Party that Lord Rosebery, the Imperialist, was a greater figure in Colonial eyes than Lord Rosebery, the Premier. Again, the Empire admires and trusts Lord Salisbury, but Lord Beaconsfield aroused its enthusiasm. It is very safe to predict that had Australasia, Canada, and the Cape been included in the electoral England of '80, he would have been returned to power by a triumphant majority. That is to say, he received more unanimous support from the free communities beyond the seas than he did in the Parent State. No more striking proof of his greatness can be advanced, and no more striking proof of the virility of the Imperial idea.

And in this last the root of the matter lies. Because the Colonies are democracies, it is quietly taken for granted that their sympathies are entirely on the side of Liberalism. This

is a mistake founded on the general ignorance in Great Britain of Vaster Britain, and cherished in spite of the teaching of history for the past fifty years. It was the Tory Lord Beaconsfield the Empire delighted to honour: not the Liberal Mr. Gladstone. In Imperial affairs it is the man who counts, not the partisan: the Colonial democracies having none of that feminine feebleness of grasp in the discussion of foreign affairs which British Radicals are so proud to show. The Little-Englander flourishes only in the belly of the body politic: he is absolutely unknown in the giant members. Origin alone would make Colonials adherents to Imperialism, and their environment and connexion with the Mother Country have given it almost the force of a religion. An Australian, for instance, may be a democrat of the most pronounced type, supporting with his vote all the wild-cat legislation which is leading certain of the Colonies dangerously near the brink of Socialism, and yet be a sound Imperialist. He is as selfish and as superficial as an English Radical in his outlook on local affairs; but the moment an Imperial matter arises he is a sober-thinking citizen of a great Empire, with a political insight as keen as his

forefathers. It is this capacity for dealing with great questions which marks him out from the school once led by Mr. Gladstone, and invests even a Socialist Ministry in New Zealand with a dignity it would not otherwise possess. Ask a Radical to name England's first line of defence, and he will probably talk about 'the silver streak.' Ask a Colonial the same question, and, without a second's hesitation, he will tell you the Navy. He believes in no miracles except those which the ceaseless efforts of a great race can achieve—the Empire, for instance, and Great Britain's supremacy on the sea. How can men be narrow in their views who are bound by the closest ties—social, political, and intellectual—to a country weeks distant by the fastest ships afloat; to whom a thousand miles means less than an Englishman's hundred; whose sheep-runs and ranches are as large as a petty German State; who have seen the wilderness take on the habit of civilisation, and splendid cities rise as it were at a magician's word?

Such men hailed a Minister, who scouted abdication, and appealed to all that was noblest in the English character in urging the race to further efforts, as an inspired leader. Like them,

he loved and believed in England; like them, he held that where she was concerned the rest of the world should count as nothing; like them, too, he valued a theory not in proportion to its plausibility, but in proportion to its capacity for squaring with the facts of life. In short, he was the statesman as distinct from the doctrinaire—a representative of the grand school of English statesmanship, not of the school of sophists, who gave an insular turn and an insular application to the fallacies of the French Revolution. Directly he took office the change was seen. Downing Street no longer rang with the petty views of the middle-class commercial man; and, for a time, the interests of the Empire were paramount to the interests of English merchants and bankers. The *prestige*, dimmed by Mr. Gladstone's vacillation and timidity, was restored to its old brilliancy, and England took again her rightful place as leader in the councils of Europe as well as of the world. Among Colonials none were quicker to read the signs of the times than the Australasians. Rightly or wrongly, they look upon Russia as their natural enemy. The Eastern Question is, therefore, hardly less vital to them than it is to

Englishmen, and the submarine telegraph, connecting them with London, having been completed in '72, they were able to follow every phase of Lord Beaconsfield's policy from the outbreak of the insurrection in Herzegovina to the close of the Congress at Berlin. As though mind had indeed conquered matter, his arrival in England was greeted on the other side of the world with a storm of enthusiasm, which might have been the echo of the enthusiasm on this. There was a difference, however. The Australasians had never seen his face nor heard the tones of his voice. Can intellect achieve a greater triumph?

Elsewhere in the Empire patriotic pride found more sober expression, but it was prompted by the same spirit. Men had been led to believe that England meant to give up her hard-won primacy, and, sending all her children adrift, to concentrate her forces behind her cliffs, and there become the manufacturing centre and the pawnshop of the world. That her ideal was worthier of the past they learned by means of Lord Beaconsfield's action in foreign affairs, and, if their enthusiasm at its success bordered on exultation, it was merely a reaction upon their

former fear. To describe us as captivated by a 'showy foreign policy,' and a 'sham Imperialism,' is to betray a most lamentable ignorance of the situation. In the first place, no people in the world are less likely to be led away by appearance without substance than hard-headed Colonials; in the second place, 'showy' and 'sham' have no meaning when they are applied either to Lord Beaconsfield's Imperialism or to his foreign policy; in the third place, the entire absence of the one and the timid and vacillating nature of the other, so distinctive of Liberal Cabinets under the leadership of Mr. Gladstone, taught the great Provinces of the Empire to mistrust the whole Liberal Party. The cause of this sensitiveness to the fluctuations of British fame is obvious enough to any one but a Radical. When it falls, as it always does on the accession to power of a Ministry favourable to his views, *he* can lull himself into a feeling of security by talking of the 'silver streak' and other Nineteenth Century superstitions. The Colonies can indulge in no such debauch. On British *prestige*, they see clearly, the Empire was built up; on British *prestige* it will be maintained. And so it comes about that what

is a matter of sentiment to the Radical is a matter of life or death to a Colony. Hence the popularity of Lord Beaconsfield.

VII

Among public men the idea seems to be general that the Empire is the glorious evidence of Downing Street statesmanship, to which of course they have contributed no little part. A more dangerous delusion it is impossible to conceive. When Sir William Harcourt speaks of the honourable share taken by the Liberal Party 'in the development of the Colonies of this country,' his words, perhaps, allow of two interpretations; but when Lord Rosebery rebukes 'those who have claimed the Empire as a sort of *prerogative and property* of another Party,' no such uncertainty can be admitted. He, in common with men of all shades of opinion in the political world, appears to take it for granted that the expansion of England has been coloured by British statesmanship: whereas it is British statesmanship which has been coloured by the expansion of England. This is an Empire tempered by the English Government, not created, nor even assisted by it

except under the strongest pressure. To compare the achievements of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries is idle. The circumstances have entirely changed. The England of Queen Victoria had but to reap where the England of George III. had sown. With Spain, Holland, and France opposed to her at every step, a strong Government under a great leader was absolutely necessary if she meant to continue her Imperial career ; and with the hour came the man. The situation, too, demanded a definite policy which—the Colonial system, faulty as it was, being thoroughly understood—the genius of Chatham formulated on the lines laid down by Elizabeth and William III. Thus the Empire presented a united front to its enemies, and by 1806 England was in possession of Canada ; the Cape, then little more than a trading station ; and Australia, a vast unknown continent whose only settlement was at Botany Bay. With the conclusion of peace the whole aspect of affairs changed. Great Britain stood without a rival on land or sea ; and, for upwards of fifty years, the world was the legitimate theatre of her sons' enterprise. In this way the individualistic tendencies of the English people were developed to

an enormous extent, and dwarfed the energies of the English Government until it lost all touch with the past, and forgot the very principles of its existence. Freed from tradition, and knowing none of the fears and anxieties which hamper Continental Ministries, it started out on a voyage of discovery in search of Universal Peace and the Brotherhood of Nations. Naturally it became the prey of all the visionaries and doctrinaires and enthusiasts in the country, and finally became frankly materialistic. There was no god but Mammon, no gospel but Free Trade, and no law except that expounded by Utilitarian Economists. In the height of its frenzy it conceived the wildly fallacious theory that Colonies were useless encumbrances to the Mother Country, and must be got rid of at any price. Then, the people of England, who had meanwhile been making her the envy of the world, awoke to the fact that *their* work had nearly been undone by their Government, and there was a reaction out of which sprang Modern Imperialism.

How, then, this same Government can claim to have been a creative agency in the work of Empire-building it is difficult to understand.

Take New Zealand, for instance : would it be now a jewel in Her Majesty's diadem, had its first settlers relied on the energy and ability of the Colonial Office? Most assuredly not; and this was actually thrown in the Colony's teeth by Earl Granville in that reckless despatch of March '69, which denied Imperial assistance in the prosecution of the Maori War, chiefly on the ground that it had been 'founded without the recognition of the home government.' What would not France or Germany give to have a New Zealand, or a dozen New Zealands, on the same terms? But virtue in the eyes of Continental Governments was a vice in the eyes of an Empire-hating Downing Street. If Sir William Harcourt would only drop his mouth-filling phrases about the noble 'part taken by the Liberal Party in the development of the Colonies of this country,' and descend to particulars, he would clear away a certain amount of cant. But this is exactly what a Radical speaker never does. Is it owing to the wisdom and foresight of Liberal statesmen that the Queen's reign has seen the rise of Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia, and Queensland? Was it under their fostering care that British Columbia

and the Great North-West were opened up to British enterprise? Was it due to them that Matabeleland and Mashonaland were added to the Empire, and the schemes of Germany frustrated in South and Central Africa? The veriest tyro in politics knows the contrary. These achievements are to the credit of the English people—not to the credit of the English Government. At the door of that Government lies the responsibility of lessening the British Empire by the Orange Free State, the Transvaal, Zanzibar, Delagoa Bay, Heligoland, and the Ionian Islands.

And so it practically comes to this: Westminster and Whitehall proved themselves incapable of keeping pace with the Empire. In the altered condition of things their proper course was clearly marked out, but either they never realised it, or they refused to follow. With a people so vigorous, so self-reliant, so enterprising as the British, a strong Government was neither necessary nor possible. Its duty was to restrain, to guide, in a word, to 'respect the future.' But the aristocratic organisation capable of such action was swept away and demoralised, and a system was inaugurated with the sole object of holding office. In this way both

Parliament and the Government soon learned to dance to the tune called by a majority, and the feeling of nationality was forgotten in party loyalty. Statesmen, instead of devoting their attention largely to Imperial affairs, and grappling with Imperial problems every year pressing more urgently for solution, occupied their time with setting class against class, and nation against nation of these realms, till England fell into a slough of provincialism, and so forfeited the confidence of the Colonies and the respect of the world. The mighty tide of Empire, which she should have guided, swept past her unheeded, leaving her high and dry, the sport of those forces she herself had called into existence. Absorbed in the petty game of party warfare at home, she lost all interest in the great Imperial game, and, for want of practice, soon ceased to remember its most elementary rules. And so we find Downing Street retreating here and blustering there; interfering when it should have let matters take their course; dawdling when decisive action was absolutely necessary; giving away British territory for nothing; gaining concessions at enormous cost which might have been won by the exercise of a little sound diplomacy; and

generally conducting Imperial affairs with a reckless disregard of system, which would ruin a private business-concern in a week. The truth is, the English Government, with a few brief intervals, has never been Imperial, except in name, since the passing of the Reform Bill. No one will feel inclined to quarrel with it for not encouraging the growth of Empire. with millions of Britons engaged in the great work all over the globe, that was wholly unnecessary. But, if it could not be a stimulating force, it might have recognised that its mission was scarcely less important. The energy of the English people was building up an Empire, no two Provinces of which were alike in origin, development, or the circumstances of their life: the object of the English Government should have been to weld them together in an organic whole, to allow no political step to be taken which was not in harmony with ultimate Imperial Unity. But, as no statesman worthy of the occasion arose until it was too late, a definite policy was never formed, and successive Governments were content to drift as circumstances led them. First, they interfered too much, irritated the Colonies, and made hideous blunders. Then followed the era of self-government. Finally Ministers took refuge

in a total evasion of responsibility, and, as conscious of their weakness, began to resent the very existence of the Empire, which was expanding in all directions, not only without their aid but, in spite of their spasmodic efforts to check it. Imperial Englishmen were looked on with a cold eye, their far-reaching schemes were thwarted, their character and aims misrepresented with all the skill and suggestiveness of the trained debater. At last the timidity (or worse) of the Government, fast becoming chronic, grew alarmed at British daring, and angered by its almost invariable success. It was as though Downing Street, a peaceful and proper jenny-wren, had suddenly found itself responsible for a brood of young eagles, which laughed at its fears, derided its counsel, and went their own way. Englishmen were warned of the dire consequences which must follow the exercise of their too exuberant energies in South Africa north of the Vaal; they were told not to go here, and to be very circumspect if they went there; they were querulously refused the protection of the English flag, if their operations in far-off regions tended to make European complications. The favourite bugbear for Colonials was the

dislike of less successful rivals. But to this they were not less callously indifferent than to the grandmotherly fears of 'Mrs. Mother Country,' who, when action was urgently required, could only be got to move by peremptory despatches from Continental Governments, or by Colonial deputations thundering at her doors. Then with a bad grace she turned from parochial business to a matter of Imperial concern. But having no well-defined plan, and by her apologetic attitude giving foreign Ministers to understand that the Colonies were in fault, and, being weighed in the balance with French or German or American friendship, as the case might be, of little moment, she too often ended her negotiations in surrender. Such an accommodating spirit lent itself admirably to the schemes of foreign statesmen, but it completely failed to secure their good-will. English Colonists they could, while disliking, respect: the English Government they both disliked and despised. In truth, they could but marvel that such a feeble instrument should be the mouthpiece of so mighty a Power.

VIII

That for over two generations Her Majesty's Ministers should have been insensible to the glory of the Empire is one of most amazing facts in our Imperial history. That history might inspire poetry and romance, stimulate enterprise, adventure, and philanthropy, and extort the grudging admiration of the world; but it could only awaken in them the coldest of calculating spirits. To others the Empire might appeal as a dominion whose milestones are the graves of heroes; whose soil is sanctified by English blood; whose lines of settlement are salted with the bones of valiant men; whose moral grandeur is on the same scale as its material magnificence. But to them it was never more than a certain number of markets for British goods, which—curious fallacy!—might be made more profitable under an alien flag. The only law they never forgot was the law of supply and demand; the only unit they ever used to measure Imperial greatness was the pound sterling; and when the Empire refused to fall in with their views they regarded it with cold dislike. This was the feeling of foreign Governments. But in them it was modified by interest and international

courtesy: in the Imperial Government it was restrained only by fear of the nation's disapproval, which a Parliamentary majority kept remote. So that practically Downing Street was a factor in Imperial affairs, whose unfriendliness came to be recognised as a certainty. But when it had forfeited the confidence of every Colony, and made such a tangle of Imperial relations that the most brilliant lawyer of his time was driven to predict the break-up of the Empire as the sole way out of it, the blame was laid, not at the door of Ministerial weakness and lack of sympathy, as it should have been, but, at the door of Colonial ingratitude. Such a transparent device for evading responsibility deceived nobody, and the Colonies asked grimly enough why it should ever have been adopted. Instead of making them feel that they and the Mother Country were one, the Government emphasised every point of difference until they were nearly on the verge of enmity, and then took every opportunity for impressing on them how little their loyalty was desired. The truth is, when they were young and poor and helpless, Downing Street acted towards them like a hard and selfish stepmother, whose only object was to get rid of

them. Now that they have grown up, and, despite the dead weight of its ignorance, developed into rich and powerful communities, it has suddenly become very loving: praying them, almost tearfully, to believe that, though belied by appearances, its intentions were always of the best!

IX

Radicals claim the entire credit for the self-government enjoyed by the Dominion, Australasia, and the Cape: waxing eloquent on it as the source of our Imperial strength and unity. Now, with all deference to the Opposition leaders, this is political cant of the most unblushing type. The Colonies are in possession of self-government, not because it is a Liberal principle, formulated by Liberal wisdom into a policy, but, because it was a ruling principle of our national life before Whig or Liberal was ever heard of. In the Britains over sea it was intensified by the blundering of a bureaucracy in London. Ministers were forced by circumstance to see that the alternative to self-government was rebellion, and as none of them dared to face the English people in the character of Lord

North, their choice was soon made. Such a course of action may have been politic, but, grounded as it was on fear, it can hardly be described as wise or generous; and those speakers, who exhausted their eloquence on it during the Jubilee celebrations, were either wide of the mark or unconsciously hypocritical. To assert that self-government was granted to the Colonies only by Liberal Governments, too, is false to history. Happily for themselves in the estimation of posterity, the Tories up to '86 had been in a majority but twice since the accession of the Queen, and one of these Governments was responsible for the Constitution Act of '42. Had that Act been fathered by a Liberal Secretary of State, however, it could not have been a greater failure; and if this says little for the Tories, it says still less for the Liberals, whose name and profession gave promise of better things. Again, in '52, during the few months in which Lord Derby held office, Sir John Pakington calmed the rising storm of Australian discontent by conceding those privileges denied by his Liberal predecessor. Of Earl Grey's preposterous attempt at drawing up a Constitution for New Zealand his own colleagues were so much ashamed that

they gave up the task of defending it as hopeless. Mr. Disraeli, with sarcastic emphasis, asked the House if it 'was to be tolerated that a Government being just formed, a member of it, imbued with certain abstract and theoretical opinions upon Colonial government, should make his *début* in his official career by drawing up with the greatest coolness what he called a "Constitution," sending it to a distant Colony, and to an appalled Governor, and be saved only by the discretion and abilities of that Governor. . . . Why have a Bill to suspend a Constitution which was not really in existence, and acknowledged by the Government to be too ridiculous to defend?' He was 'astonished by one great assumption, that there was a Constitution which had been suspended. . . . Why should they introduce into this new, this simple, this primitive society such a degree of enormous lying?'

x

Undoubtedly, from '55 upwards, self-government was the policy of successive Liberal Ministries. But it became popular only as the Colonies themselves became unpopular; and so it aimed at loosen-

ing the ties of Empire, not at binding them close. Therefore, the less Radicals have to say about their share in Empire-building the better. Indeed, it would be just as well if *all* leaders of public opinion would forget the political cant of the day, and admit that the secret of British success is to be found in the character of the British people. England is supreme among the nations, not because her rulers were wise and far-seeing but, because the line of her great men is unbroken. Now that Prince Bismarck has ceased to be a maker of history, it may be questioned if the world can boast of any other statesman who so nearly stands on a level with the great ones of the past as Mr. Rhodes. He is the direct successor of Clive and Warren Hastings, and, as a potential political figure, he is the peer of such pre-eminent personalities as Lord Salisbury and the Emperor of Austria. But, while the forward movement of the race is identified with the lives of such mighty pioneers as he, its strength lies in the men who follow in their wake. Patriotic, courageous, incorruptible, just, and merciful, they serve their country with a soundness of judgment and a single-hearted devotion to duty which have never been equalled. The roll of English heroes is long

enough in all conscience, but it is short compared to the roll whose names are written in the sands of the great Imperial Unknown. The Empire, whose foundations were laid on the self-sacrifice, the courage, and the labour of countless millions, is the magnificent proof of this. One hardly knows which to admire more: the simplicity of Her Majesty's representatives of the first rank, or the restraint of lesser lights in the official firmament, who, while nowise inferior in ability, are proud to fill positions of the second and third importance. More suggestive still is the loyalty of those of the Queen's servants who are never brought into close contact with her (among these, of course, Mr. Rhodes and Sir Wilfrid Laurier take the first place). It will thus be seen that the outlines of the Empire are marked out by giants, the details filled in by the humbler settler, and the slow processes of consolidation directed by a civil army, whose ranks are inspired by Duty, as the Crusaders in mediæval times were inspired by the Cross. It is this perfect harmony of forces within itself, which leads foreign critics to imagine that the British Empire was brought into being by a few happy strokes of chance. They forget that, as art can conceal art, so effort can conceal effort,

and that the experience of centuries can and does work as smoothly as though the gods themselves had bestowed it as a gift.

The thoughtful Englishman is, however, not quite so easily deceived by appearances. He has begun to realise that one wheel of the Imperial machinery does not move in unison with the rest; and, whether he admits it or not, that wheel is the Colonial Office. From the superior heights of our own complex system we have got into the habit of sneering at the bureaucratic Governments of the Continent, while denying to them the flexibility and responsiveness without which they must lose touch with the people for whose benefit they exist. We forget the century-old bureaucracy in Downing Street, and that other bureaucracy we call the Board of Trade: which, as it works in the interest of a particular commercial creed, might be more properly described as the Board of Free Trade. The truth is, there is scarce a bureaucracy in Europe which could not give us points in organisation, in diplomacy, and in far-reaching statesmanship. Moreover, there is no bureaucracy in the world guilty of greater crimes than our own Colonial Office. Of these, the endeavour to transform the noblest

Empire of all time into a convict settlement, and the effort to dwarf it to the proportions of one small Island, are the most enormous. It may be even doubted if the English Ministerial conception of the mutual relations between the Parent State and her Colonies has been until lately superior to the French and German. The difference in effect lies in the character of the officials who carry it out, and in the admirable qualities of Englishmen as settlers. Again, the colonising system of England and Spain during the Eighteenth Century was essentially the same. But between the South American Colonies and the United States there was little in common but their origin. The sooner we realise that the Governments of Europe are guided by the principles which used to guide British Ministries, the sooner will England recover her position as the arbiter of Europe. For a generation or more Westminster has been travelling, not towards Imperialism, which should have been its goal, but, towards the most abject parochialism.

Therefore, when Lord Rosebery talks of 'those who have claimed the Empire as a sort of prerogative and property of another Party,' no Colonial can follow him. The Empire is not the property

of any party, people, or Parliament whatsoever, but the 'property' of the English race, at the head of which is Her Majesty the Queen. It was not the Empire which Lord Beaconsfield made 'a sort of prerogative' of the Tory Party : it was Imperialism. Earl Grey, being taunted by his opponents with his efforts to plant American rather than English institutions in the Colonies, childishly replied that an oak-tree eight hundred years old could not be transplanted : an excuse whose fatuousness has surely never been equalled ! No one ever supposed an English Minister to be capable of such folly, but men did expect that acorns would have been sown in the Britains over sea, which in process of time would have grown into stately trees. That was not done, and the acorns that were planted, now sturdy saplings, were carried across the ocean by the Colonists themselves. Lord Beaconsfield, however, saw more clearly into the future. Though it was late in the day to sow Imperial seed, it was not yet too late. A narrow creed and official stupidity had closed, indeed, to British statesmanship the legitimate field of political enterprise ; but they were powerless to check the growth of ' Colonial sympathy with the Mother

Country,' which, Lord Beaconsfield rightly affirmed, saved the Empire from disintegration. Relying on its strength, he sowed the acorn, which has since developed into the spreading oak of Imperialism. In the Colonies it gave new life to loyalty, producing those advances towards Federation which, though coldly received by the Home Government, were not without their influence on the mind of the English people. In Britain its effect was more gradual. During Lord Beaconsfield's life, and for some years after his death, Imperialism was merely the inspiration of a party. Time has so far justified his wisdom that it is now the inspiration of a race.

The favourite way of discounting the value of his statesmanship is to deny his capacity for accurate thinking. If by this is meant his contempt for the cheap political economy and the flash philosophies of the Nineteenth Century, it is the greatest compliment which can be paid to him. He was not an accurate thinker, forsooth, because he failed to see the soundness of Free Trade; because he had a profound reverence for the Established Church; because he saw the hand of the destroyer in those measures which robbed the House of Lords and the Crown of

their proper functions ; because he could not demonstrate with mathematical clearness that the Colonies were a burden to the Mother Country, nor desire that England, the Empire, the world, might perish rather than a theory should prove false ! Curiously enough, however, the progress of events, while vindicating him, put his opponents to confusion. The man in the street has lost all confidence in them, and abides by a statesman who knew men and things better than he knew the works of Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, and the principles of good government and a national policy better than the teaching of the Schools.

Unable to deny that Imperialism was the basis of Lord Beaconsfield's policy, his enemies strive to depreciate its value by describing it as Oriental. If Englishmen failed to understand why India, and not Canada, the Australias, and the Cape, benefited most by his Imperial ideas, Colonials understood it only too well. Fearing the break-up of British dominion was imminent, they were grateful for a practical demonstration of its unity anywhere in east or west, without regard to race or source ; and, unlike the men who heaped their scorn on the title of Empress

while eulogising the empty and worthless title of Suzerain, they saw its deep political significance. India's pride at that time might be theirs at some future date. In the same spirit they heard of the presence of Sikh troops in Malta: perhaps the most masterly stroke of modern Imperial policy, for it bore fruit in that grander demonstration of Imperial unity, the Queen's Procession last June. Seven years later New South Wales Lancers and Canadian Voyageurs stood side by side with their English brethren in the Egyptian War: though it may be doubted if the Australian contingent would have been sent at that particular time, but for the terrible certainty that Mr. Gladstone would betray General Gordon. Like all men ahead of their age, Lord Beaconsfield must be measured not so much by what he did as by what he conceived. With Columbus and Savonarola, he belongs to a small but select order in history, whose partial failures are of more value to posterity than the triumphant successes of lesser men. His end, however, more nearly resembles the great Hebrew Law-giver's. Like Moses, he led the people to the Promised Land only to die within sight of it. But the glory of it spread out before him not

from the foot of Mount Pisgah but from the heights of his own imagination.

If his Imperial achievements fell immeasurably below his own ideal, no other statesman of his time has equalled them. The Tories, when the century was young, were as narrow in their views of Colonial expansion as the Whigs. Therefore it was he who gave Imperialism a leading place in their political creed. What other Leader of a Party during the Victorian era preached a faith which, twenty years later, became not only National but Imperial? Moreover, he revived the confidence of the Colonies in the Home Government, sadly shaken by the Disintegration Theory of Mr. Gladstone, and created a hearty feeling of loyalty in India. Also, he added to the Empire the Fiji Islands, in which is the only coaling station between Vancouver and Sydney, the Transvaal, and Cyprus.

To account for his influence on the Colonial mind, one must remember that the enormous distance which stretches between these Islands and the great provinces of the Empire has a similar effect on the fame of a statesman as distance in time. All the charm of personality, the magic of eloquence, the subtle arts by which the fickle

affections of the populace is gained, fall away from him as he stands before our kinsfolk beyond the seas, and to them the man is revealed as he is—great or little, as the case may be. In forming their judgment, too, they are free from class prejudices and interests, and from the warping influence of Party bias. Their verdict is thus to a large extent the verdict of posterity. They estimate a Minister of the Crown, not by his Liberalism or his Conservatism, but by his Imperialism. And it was by this test they judged Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone. Imagination is a quality in which British statesmanship is sadly lacking, and no quality is more essential to the man who should give voice to the hopes and aspirations of this great Empire. Because it was pre-eminent in Lord Beaconsfield, he was regarded in the Colonies as a worthy successor to Chatham, to whom alone he can be compared. And, if he made mistakes and miscalculated the strength of his own position in the country, he may be forgiven, as much may be forgiven in a statesman animated solely by a sincere regard for the honour of England and the unity of the Empire. That the instinct of Colonials was not at fault is amply demonstrated by their annual

celebration of Primrose Day, which, if there be any fitness in things, is destined to develop into the Imperial Day of some future date. Lord Beaconsfield, the Imperialist, they accepted as their leader; Mr. Gladstone, the Little-Englander, they rejected. Will posterity say that they were wrong?

XI

Imperialism never wanted advocates even at its lowest ebb. With Dismemberment rife in official circles, and the Classes given over to fetich-worship, there yet remained 'seven thousand, all the knees which had not bent to Baal.' To them England owes scarce less than to her intrepid Colonial sons; for it is yet more difficult to hold an Empire together than to build one up, and it was on these, supported by the loyalty of the Britains over sea, that the brunt of the battle fell. For years they laboured, as it seemed in vain: the sound of their voice was drowned in the clamour of contending factions and the triumphing sectaries of Free Trade. But they were not disheartened. Those same qualities, which were widening the frontiers of the Empire

on three Continents, they employed in the humbler task of keeping alive the Imperial spirit in these Realms. With a patient, almost an heroic courage they struggled against stupidity, ignorance, error, and treason. For a quarter of a century they preached to deaf ears. They had to bear the scorn of their enemies, and the pity of their friends. Their Colonial brethren were cheered by success, and stimulated by an atmosphere electrical with possibilities—the atmosphere of new and vigorous communities: they were sustained by the strength of their own conviction only. Such men are the glory of England, and, happily for her, she has always been able to command their services at critical periods in her history—the secret, perhaps, of her moral pre-eminence. The story of Sodom may be a myth, but its essentials are as old as civilisation itself. And so the National Conscience has never been so dead in England that it has not been awakened in time to avert national retribution.

Like most great movements in their infancy, Imperialism knew no class, party, nor creed. In its ranks were to be found representatives of every social order and every shade of opinion—all animated by the same disinterested motive,

and all conscious that they were devoting their best energies to an unpopular cause. But it was not for the present they worked—it was for the future: a distinction they share with the greatest statesmen on the roll of fame. It takes a rare combination of qualities to sow seed that remote posterity may harvest, and no political or religious movement has ever been originated without it. But if, as in the Empire at large, the strength of Imperialism lay in the rank and file, its power of generating sympathy in the hearts of the great mass of the people was to be found in its leaders. First, among those who are no longer with us, was Carlyle, its earliest and greatest prophet; was Tennyson, who sang of it in stately measures, recalling England to forgotten duty, and rebuking the craven-spirited children of Mammon by his own exalted patriotism; was Beaconsfield, its inspiration and creative genius up to the present hour; was Forster, the founder of the Federation League; were Lord Carnarvon, the seventh Duke of Manchester, Judge Haliburton, and Mr. Edward Jenkins. Of living statesmen Lord Salisbury and Lord Rosebery are by far the most distinguished among its friends: two loyal adherents, whose length of service and whose

intellectual weight mark them out from the train of renegades and time-servers, who would fain push them aside. For every politician is an Imperialist now, or says he is, and says it with a fervour that is most intense when the cant of Little-Englandism is still the very trick of his lips. The growth of Anglo-Saxon unity has given us many surprises, but none so ironical as the evolution of the Radical, professing 'the eternal principles of Liberalism,' into the full-blown Imperialist. As a political force Democracy may be sadly defective, but there can be no doubt that it has thoroughly mastered the secret of bending its so-called chiefs to its will.

XII

In the pursuit of a noble object, as in the case of Imperialism, this is well. But it reflects little credit on either party in the State that Lord George Hamilton, alone among the statesmen sitting on the Government and Opposition benches, should have been identified with Imperialism in the early Seventies. About the same time it enlisted the services of Mr. Froude, Sir John Seeley, Sir H. Drummond Wolff, Sir

John Colomb, the Earl of Harrowby, then Viscount Sandon, and Lord, then Mr., Brassey. Of its progress since '84 there is no need to speak. The movement, which in '69 was so feeble that its only leaders, capable of initiative, were three unknown Colonials, now attracts to its ranks the very flower of the intellect, wealth, and aristocracy of the country. Such is the difference between popularity and unpopularity. With this enormous access of influence, Imperialism's chief recruit of late years is Mr. Rudyard Kipling: who has done more to make the Empire a living reality to Englishmen than any one since the death of Lord Beaconsfield. Through the magic medium of song and story he has dispelled the old insular idea, that it is merely a part of that mysterious region known as abroad, 'into which our friends sometimes disappear and from which sometimes they return'; or a kind of territorial machine for receiving British goods, and supplying British factories with cheap raw material, and Britons with cheap food: that in fact it is built in and up with scattered communities of English men and women set to the work of building up other and vaster Britains, or of ruling the teeming millions of India and tropical Africa. More-

over, he has brought home to the dullest mind how Empire was won, and how Empire is maintained. In his hands it is a lyre by whose means he reveals those deep and sounding harmonies that, until his advent, were almost unknown. With the Empire's multiform life spread out before him like a book, he scorns the material Briton's conception of it; and, taking a point of view equally extreme, sees in it only men—Englishmen—who worthily carry on the splendid traditions of England's Imperial past. With humorous irony he contrasts them with certain of their brethren at home, who, dry-rotted with peace and plenty, and mistaking these for a noble growth of civilisation, regard *them* as an inferior order of beings, which must be kept rigorously in check. He discovers us their lust of life, their abounding optimism, their faith in the Empire of which they are the central pillar, their courage and devotion to duty, their grip of first principles, their good-natured contempt for the insoluble problems and portentous nothings, which agitate the minds of men, who live at ease in a progressive society, remote from danger and the realities of frontier and continental existence.

In truth, it is even as he has said. The Dominion that Englishmen realise so imperfectly is sustained not only by the Navy and the superlative wisdom of the arm-chair critic at home but by the brain and muscle, the energy and endurance of the race. It has been bought with the lives of millions of England's bravest sons; its soil has been fertilised with blood and tears—its advance impeded by war, famine, pestilence, and religious discord. This is its tragic side, to which this Poet has done no less justice than to its glory. Superior persons, big enough to embrace the world, but not big enough to embrace the British Empire, were heard to profess astonishment that, when the national exultation incident to the Jubilee was still high, he of all men should have struck a religious note, which echoed in the hearts of Englishmen all over the globe! They forget that deep religious feeling is not always strongest in the man of peace: it has been inseparable from the English character from the very beginning. The spirit of the aged Ealdorman, who was ready to welcome Christianity in the hope that it might shed light on the mystery of man's life: likened by him to a bird which, driven into the

hall by a winter's storm, rests for a moment by the fire and then disappears into the darkness whence it came: is the spirit that animates the earnest Englishman of to-day. But this is not admitted by Liberals and Radicals, who maintain that it is theirs alone, denying it to Colonials, and Imperialists generally, with vituperation: perhaps because these others have yet to learn the art of making it subservient to party interests or to a narrow political creed. It has still to be proved, however, that the Infinite is nearer Fleet Street and the Strand than to the lonely settlement in the wilderness, or is more likely to speak through the man who lives in the lap of civilisation than through the man who, in the service of his Sovereign, is familiar with hardship, danger, and the shadow of death in the immensity of Further Britain.

XIII

That lassitude should take possession of the English people, at the close of its titanic struggle with the world, was natural and inevitable. But at most it lasted only twenty years, when England entered on a career of industrial and

territorial expansion without a parallel in history. The result of that is the British Empire; which received living expression for the first time last June. Perhaps it is natural that men, who have only just begun to realise it as a stupendous fact, should dwell more on its grandeur and power and might than on its political weakness. But the mistake is none the less grave. It is very fine, no doubt, so far to surpass all the great Empires of the past as to leave little or no basis for comparison; but when the only particular, in which the British Empire plays second, lies at the very root of its existence, the area for self-congratulation is considerably narrowed. The expansion of Egypt, Assyria, Carthage, Rome, Spain, Holland, followed certain fixed principles, which might vary with time and circumstance, but were always fundamentally the same. England alone has waxed great and glorious with none: she has developed from an island kingdom into a wide-world Dominion, as it were unknown to herself, so that consciousness was awakened in her only by a pageant designed to honour the reigning Sovereign. This absence of intention in empire-building more than accounts for the extraordinary anomalies, which

serve in the stead of political unity. The British Empire is a giant body, whose limbs are connected with it so loosely as to render it almost helpless ; or, to use an illustration, which has never been bettered, it is a barrel without hoops. The barrel has been made by the English people, and is of such noble proportions as to be the envy and admiration of the world ; the hoops, which it was the duty of the Home Government to provide, are still wanting. With curious perversity English Ministers conceived that it lay with them to hinder the building of the barrel, which in consequence has several ugly flaws. For these sins of omission and commission the British Empire is, politically, at a standstill to-day. ‘When self-government was conceded, it ought to have been conceded as part of a great policy of Imperial consolidation. It ought to have been accompanied by an Imperial Tariff . . . and by a military code, which should have precisely defined the means and responsibilities by which the Colonies should have been defended, and by which, if necessary, this country should call for aid from the Colonies themselves. It ought, further, to have been accompanied by the institution of some representative council in the

metropolis, which would have brought the Colonies into constant and continuous relations with the Home Government.' Mr. Disraeli, that is, saw clearly that an opportunity for hooping the barrel had been lost for ever, and that the barrel itself would have been broken in pieces but for the sturdy resistance of its coopers. Through her blind and infatuated rulers England had all but thrown away her birthright for a mess of pottage.

But if the men in power failed to split up the Empire into divers independent nations, they threw back Imperial unity at least a generation. Instead of being gained by easy stages in the natural course of things, it will have to be won by slow steps and stormy conflicts of opinion, with the chance that our enemies may close in on us before we are in a position to act on the defensive as an organic whole. That the task is colossal no thinking man anywhere in these broad Realms of ours will deny; but that it is beyond the combined resources of English and Colonial statesmen none with a living faith in the British Empire will readily admit. The political genius, which has never yet failed the English, will not fail them

now. The real difficulties present themselves on this side the water, and they are immense. English Ministers are confronted not only with the problems of the hour but with the problems which have been gathering for sixty years. When they look round, and see agriculture, the only sound basis of a nation's prosperity, crushed and hopeless under the yoke of foreign competition, trade depressed, Ireland disaffected, labour in a chronic state of rebellion, army organisation faulty, and the Empire still 'a geographical expression' so far as political unity is concerned—all which vexed questions were in an acute stage thirty years ago—they may well feel their hearts sink within them. Nor is this all. As though the burden of our national troubles were not already heavy enough to bear, Ministers went on adding to it by their own weakness and slavish deference to the demands of a majority. In South Africa, Egypt, the near East, they sowed that seed of whose evil fruits there is no end. That the present Government should be reaping of them largely is supposed to be its misfortune. In one sense no doubt it is; but in another it is nothing less than political retribution, which, as it too seldom does in the official world, has fallen on

the right men. Leading members of the present Cabinet were leading members of the inglorious Administration of '80-85, which gave us Majuba Hill and the Conventions of London and Pretoria; other leading members were colleagues of Lord Beaconsfield, and, unnerved by the disasters of the Crimean War, so hampered his action in '76 that he lost a golden chance of settling the Eastern Question for a century, and in a manner favourable to England. That chance will never occur again, and meanwhile Europe is kept in a fever of unrest, and the Federation of All the Britains forced to wait.

XIV

With curious egotism, Englishmen have got into the habit of taking it for granted that their view of a question is Imperial; the Colonial view provincial. If this were not irritating, it would be amusing; for Colonials, putting no great strain on their memory, can recall a time when the exact contrary was so much the truth as to be a commonplace. They are the same men that they were then: it is Englishmen who have changed, and, the Imperial spirit having been born again

in them, they assume that the Imperial qualities it develops became theirs at the same moment. But Nature knows none of those short cuts to greatness. England cannot take up the Imperialism of sixty years since as if it had not been forgotten in the meantime. In the first place, the Imperialism of to-day differs from the Imperialism of our forefathers, inasmuch as it must tend towards the consolidation of the Empire: whereas theirs largely created the forces which built it up. In the second place, Imperialism, like all national movements, is of slow growth, and a generation has grown up trained in the school of Little-Englandism. Why, then, the Imperial perspective of this country should be truer than it is in Colonies whose loyalty to the Empire has never wavered, is not quite clear. An historic past alone will not give it; for though an historic past, like an ancient title, is strictly entailed, the ability and moral force necessary to carry on its traditions worthily must be developed by each succeeding generation on its own account. Should it fail, the glory of its inheritance only serves to light up the shadows of the present and to act as a living rebuke to disgrace. With the revival of Imperialism, the people of England

will, no doubt, prove that the spirit of the men who supported Chatham and Pitt has fallen on them; but that is for the future to show. A superior tone towards the Colonies will be out of place for twenty years yet.

But, admitting that the Mother Country's Imperial perspective is more accurate than the Colonial, the value of it may be questioned when it does almost nothing in determining her policy. The Australias, Canada, and the Cape may not be able to grasp the full significance of a local question, but their action always bears some proportion to their light: whereas the course of Imperial Ministers is so uncertain as to give the impression that they unwillingly sacrifice their reputation for Statesmanship to British commercial interests. In other words, in the opinion of the average Englishman England is the Empire, but the Colonies are a fringe of 'plantations' at the other end of her trade lines. Yet it was she that originated the theory of Imperial dissolution; in them it was rejected with indignation. It was not she who showed the true Imperial spirit by accepting the Treaty of Washington—it was Canada. In New Guinea, the New Hebrides, and Samoa her weakness of purpose

planted France and Germany at the very gates of Australia; at her surrender of the Transvaal, her abandonment of the Soudan, her scuttle from Afghanistan the whole Empire thrilled with shame. The extremity of Gordon aroused a passion of sympathy in every English Colony. In spite of the eloquent appeals of individuals, the Liberal party, which made him its scapegoat, as a whole remained cold. It was angered that he would not adopt the methods of its revered Leader, and essay to lay the storm of faction in the Soudan with a few Liberal catchwords. Sir Wilfrid Lawson saw no reason for the despatch of an expedition to the Soudan: he would rather vote £300,000 to enable the Mahdi to put down General Gordon. The public opinion so near to death as to tolerate the utterance of such a monstrous view was incapable of putting a stop to the political 'rally,' which ended in the bloody streets of Khartoum. The members of Colonial Legislatures are not as a rule so dignified or so restrained as the members of the House of Commons; but Colonial Hansards may be searched in vain for a speech so entirely lacking in patriotism and political perspective as Sir Wilfrid Lawson's of August '84.

Not that an intense form of provincialism is unknown in the Colonies; but it is kept within the bounds of decency by the Imperial spirit of the people at large. Mr. Labouchere, Mr. Courtney, Mr. W. S. Caine, Sir William Wedderburn would not dare to speak in the Australias or in Canada as they speak at Westminster. A notable instance of the living character of Colonial Imperialism was given some years ago during the visit of the brothers Redmond on behalf of the Home Rule cause. At public meetings in England these gentlemen sat on the same platform with the leading statesmen of the day. In Melbourne, Sir John O'Shanassy, ex-Premier of Victoria, though an Irishman and a Roman Catholic, declined to give them any public encouragement, and after a few stormy meetings they were obliged to abate the rancour of their lectures, which had not been found too strong for English audiences, or go empty away. And not very many months ago Mr. Ben Tillet, who presumed to forget the existence of the Queen, was reminded of it in a way he is not likely to forget. Strange that a 'labour leader' should know so little of his own class as to blunder where a peer of

the realm would have scored a triumphant success !

xv

Nor can it be said that English Imperialism showed to advantage in the South African or the Venezuelan crises of '96. The hysterical burst of admiration which greeted Mr. Chamberlain's action in denouncing Dr. Jameson's intervention in the affairs of the Transvaal, was due less to an Imperial sense of responsibility with regard to the Uitlanders than to a conviction that the chances of war were thereby minimised, and that England, not the Empire, was placed in the best possible light towards the Governments of Europe. Later, all Imperial perspective was lost. South Africa, for the second time in twenty years, became a counter in the game of party politics, and no interests save those of Her Majesty's Government and Opposition had a chance of being remembered. The South African Committee, which for farcical ineptitude resembled nothing so much as a women's debating society, was appointed, in spite of all Colonial obligations, to satisfy the scruples of the English Nonconformist Conscience. Naturally

it failed; but it succeeded only too well in fanning the flame of race animosities in South Africa. There is, however, a National Conscience, which differs from the Nonconformist variety by its inflexibility; and if the futility of the South African Committee has aroused it to the danger of allowing the idea of British Confederation to drift and go under, that Committee will not have been in vain.

While the dignity of the Press in discussing President Cleveland's insolent message to Congress of December '95, and the absence of all national excitement at the ominous opening of '96, were worthy the nation's best traditions, the attitude of a large section of the English people towards the Venezuelan Question as a whole was almost ridiculously sentimental. The only sound basis for international relations is self-respect, without which diplomacy is apt to lose itself in a maze of contradictions, ending in a weak surrender of its position. The three stock-arguments of the party opposed to a firm stand against Yankee bluster were the friendliness of the people of the United States, their strong blood-ties with ourselves, and the abominable wickedness of war in general. All three are

fallacies. Americans always have been, and will always be, England's most bitter and persistent enemies. That they are our 'kith and kin' is true enough, no doubt; but when the relationship is swamping in a sea of Celtic, Slavonic, and Teutonic immigration, it must surely be one in the forty-second degree. Again, if war be an unmixed evil, as enthusiasts tell us, how is it that, in the individual, it engenders courage, honour, self-control, devotion to duty, patriotism, and self-sacrifice? For forty years the people of England have practically enjoyed the blessings of Peace. Can the modern apostle say that this long release has encouraged the growth of truth, loftiness of spirit, generosity, unselfishness, simplicity, or honesty? Peace, in truth, is a pool which, without war at intervals, becomes stagnant. But the men who talk and act on this assumption are denounced by their lotus-eating brethren as barbarians. If to be civilised we must forget the dignity of manhood, beg with tears for friendship withheld, betray the trust of our fathers, surrender a share of our children's inheritance at the bidding of a stranger, and, in short, play the part of cravens instead of honest men, then barbarians

let us be! For, assuredly, we shall be good citizens.

The Venezuelan Question, we are told, was 'trumpery': an adjective which has done service in describing two out of every three Colonial grievances for a generation. But, except in its earliest stages, was it so? A matter which involves the honour of England cannot but be of the first importance, and we owe to the United States that the Venezuelan Question was of this magnitude. American interference gave it international and Imperial significance. Prosperity has made England forget many political lessons, but none so completely as the most elementary of all: the nation that will not defend its rights is on the high-road to lose them. In contrast with the sentimentality of England was the common-sense view of Canada. Though she knew that, in the event of war, the weight of the burden would fall on her, she was in favour of a firm refusal to the extravagant demands of the Government at Washington, and she was bitterly disappointed by Lord Salisbury's later attitude, both on the Boundary Question and on the Monroe Doctrine. Yet it might safely be supposed that the over-seas English know at least as

much of the Americans as the English this side, and are not more given to seeking a quarrel.

There is a curious irony in the fact that Imperialism owes more to Germany than to any other outside influence. In '84 England was made to realise the value of the Colonies by the restless energy of Bismarck ; in '96 she was made to realise the necessity for unity by the Kaiser's telegram to President Kruger, an affront which stirred the patriotic spirit of the nation as it has not been stirred since the Indian Mutiny. For England is not Carthage ; the Kaiser is not Cato ; Germany is not Rome.

XVI

But though Imperialism has become a popular movement, it cannot be said that English statesmen are doing yeomen service in its cause. Nearly three decades have passed since the seed was sown, and still there is very little sign of harvest. Up to the end of last year only two steps had been taken towards English unity: the conference of '87, called by Lord Salisbury, and the admittance of Colonial Judges to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council, which we owe

to Lord Rosebery. To these may be added the foundation of the Imperial Federation League by Mr. Forster. The Indian and Colonial Exhibition, the finest object-lesson on the grandeur and extent of the Empire given to Englishmen, until the Jubilee Procession eclipsed it, was due to the initiative of the Prince of Wales rather than to the energy of the Government, and the same may be said of what is, apparently, a practical failure—I mean the Imperial Institute. Ministers seem to think that when, on State occasions, they deliver impassioned speeches on the glory and advantages of British Confederation, the work of bringing it about may be quietly left to chance or to Colonial pressure. They may remember that it is the business of statesmanship to create it, but they rarely allow the memory to trouble them. Of all the subjects vital to the nation Imperialism is wrapped in the thickest haze of misunderstanding; yet they seldom or never attempt to disperse that haze, and evidences are not wanting of their capacity for thickening it. At Wolverhampton, in June '87, Lord Randolph Churchill described King George's Sound as 'one of the most important waterways in the world; it is on the road to Australia, and the

British and Indian commerce that passes through King George's Sound to Australia is valued at £120,000,000 a year.' These extraordinary statements prove nothing except the danger of a little knowledge. School-Board children sometimes make use of their ill-digested information with ludicrous effect ; but they have serious rivals in Members of Parliament who venture on details in a Colonial or an Indian debate. A collection of their mistakes would be even more interesting than the gems of examination humour collected by industrious inspectors ; but, happily for the fame of more than one public man, Hansard and the forgotten files of the daily newspaper never give up their secrets. But it is quite possible for statesmen unable to define a sound, and so hazy as to the position of a particular one as to confuse it either with the Indian Ocean or the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb, to conceive and carry out successfully a wide and far-reaching policy.

XVI

In the attitude of the great body of Englishmen towards the Colonial Office lies the broad difference between English and Colonial Imperial-

ism. Can any good come out of Nazareth? asked the Jew; can any good come out of the Colonial Office? asks the Colonial. Since it came into existence he has tried to make the English people understand that to him it is a foreign institution; and he has utterly failed. It gives satisfaction to the average Briton, whose knowledge of it is confined to the name; and if the Empire sees it in a different light, then so much the worse for the Empire: that seems to be the argument in force at Whitehall, the Imperialism of noble Lords and loyal Commons notwithstanding. Of late years the Colonial has ceased to preach the reform of his old enemy, probably from a sense of hopelessness. But he *can* stand aloof from it, and he does. He knows very well that the Colonial Office is a misnomer, and a misnomer of the most misleading kind. It should be called the English Office for the Colonies, and the Colonial Secretary the English Secretary for the Colonies; and if these names were adopted, the British Public might perhaps wake up to the necessity for a change in its constitution. But so long as the class, which ought to know better, persists in taking for granted a principle denied by every self-governing province of the Empire,

such a happy turn of affairs is in the distant future. 'If France in full military possession of London desires the cession of Australia, we must cede Australia.' This was not said by George III., or Grenville, or North, or any bad old Tory, but by *The Spectator*, only ten years ago. Liberal speakers and writers are in the habit of assuming that the American War was entirely due to the obstinacy of the King and his Ministers: whereas from the published records of the time it is perfectly clear that these were in complete harmony with the feeling of the nation. That the same feeling is still a force in the land there are only too many proofs, and Liberalism has been triumphant for two generations. But Australia is not the property of the people of England: it is an integral portion of the British Empire, which would fight against French ascendancy to its last cartridge. If the trading classes of Britain herself imagine that, in extremity, they will be allowed to purchase their own peace and safety by the abandonment of any part of Further Britain to foreign rule, they labour under a huge mistake. Canada has twice shown her ability to defend herself against the superior force of an army, and the heart of the race beats no less high in Australia

and South Africa. There was an excuse for the selfishness of the men of the Eighteenth century —there is none for the selfishness of the men of the Nineteenth ; and in spite of the political cant of the day, Imperialism has never taken root in the Liberal Party. Lord Rosebery says that its rise was connected with neither party in the State ; but one is inclined to wonder if he would be quite so ready to father this statement had Liberalism played the same Imperial part as Toryism. Evidently he has discovered that it is impossible to trace the origin of Imperialism to the efforts of Liberal leaders. That is only a small part of the discovery made by Colonials, who have never been able to identify either Liberals or Radicals with the movement at all, except in individual cases. It is the Conservative, and not the Liberal, Party which has shown itself ‘ more anxious for the honour of the nation than for its gold.’

‘ We are fellow-subjects of the King, and fellow-subjects of one part of his dominions are not sovereigns over fellow-subjects in any other part ’: —this is the principle which underlies the whole Colonial history of England. But it is universally accepted only in the Empire ; in England

its recognition has been so gradual that it is not yet strong enough to influence Imperial thought. The Colonial Office represents none except the people of England, who are not Colonials at all. Therefore, the basis of responsibility according to English ideas is wanting. To the self-governing provinces this is a matter of little moment, but to the possessions of the Crown, to Territories and Protectorates, it is of the first importance; and that is why Rhodesia prefers the rule of the Chartered Company. What the Colonial Office may do in the future, it is impossible to tell; but its record in the past does not entitle it to the same faith from Colonials which it receives from Englishmen, whose confidence in British Ministers of the party to which they belong is superior even to their patriotism.

XVII

The position taken by Imperial statesmen towards Federation is merely extraordinary. They tell us that it is the Colonies which must make the 'first move.' As more 'first moves' than it would be prudent to count have already been made, there is a certain grim humour in the

appearance of the suggestion at this late day, as if it were new. Lord Salisbury, Lord Rosebery, Mr. Chamberlain, all tell the same story. Therefore, Conservatives, Liberals, and Radicals are on this particular question as one. Such complete unanimity of opinion in the rival schools of political thought induces one to suspect that weakness lies behind; and so it does. Why should the Colonies be expected to lead the way in federating the Empire? That surely should be the privilege of the Mother Country. The Dominion, South Africa, and the Australias are new communities: their energies are wholly engaged in the work of building up New Britains in the likeness of the Old. Sixty years ago most of them had no existence, and others were lost in the wilderness, or were fringes on the sea-shore. To-day they are nations, potentially more powerful than European countries of the second rank, and all anxious for that unity which is the secret of Imperial strength. Naturally they look towards the Parent State for realisation. Therein they know are contained the forces generated by a thousand years of effort; an unbroken political tradition; the institutions which do not bear transplanting; a leisured class; and a wealth of

intellect and administrative ability such as no other Empire in this or any other age has ever had at its disposal. But, say the statesmen, with all these resources in their possession:— ‘We can do nothing: the impulse towards union must come from the Colonies.’ It is not enough that they widen the frontiers of the Empire, civilise at every step, build cities, bridge continents with railways, and otherwise add to the material strength of England: they must also solve Imperial problems! Did ever Imperial statesman make a confession of greater impotence?

In '90 a deputation from the Federation League waited on Lord Salisbury to urge that a conference be convened to ‘consider the question of securing the Colonies a real and effective share in the privileges and responsibilities of a United Empire,’ but wisely offering no ‘cut-and-dried scheme’ of their own. This was described by the Premier as ‘extravagant modesty on their part.’ On the contrary, the ‘extravagant modesty’ lay with Lord Salisbury. When commonplace folk see that the only hope for the future of England is to be found in Federation, it cannot be hidden from statesmen, and it is their duty,

not the duty of struggling Colonies and loyal Englishmen of distinction, to devise the means. Of all things the least to be desired is a paper constitution. Let English political unity be a growth, as slow and certain and flexible as the British Constitution itself, on which it shall be the latest and noblest graft. Unfortunately, however, England's blind watchmen in the Tower of State have let every opportunity slip past them unheeded. As any unprejudiced person must admit, the era of self-government was the chosen time for forging the links of future Imperial union; but if that chance was lost by a peculiar combination of circumstances, there have been others since, which might have been turned to account by a statesman with the will. In '58 South Africa was ripe for Confederation; but in spite of the urgent appeals of Sir George Grey, the Ministry threw cold water on it. In '67 the Dominion was born, and though Sir John Macdonald tried to awaken the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos to its Imperial significance, it was regarded at the Colonial Office as of merely local importance. When the English troops were recalled from all parts of Further Britain, a splendid opportunity presented itself of replacing them

with regiments recruited in the Colonies ; but the Canadian and Australasian Governments, which suggested as much, were officially snubbed. In '71 the first conference representative of the English-speaking race was held in London, but so far as the Ministry of the day was concerned it might never have been. In '84 Canada offered to support an Imperial regiment recruited in the Dominion, and was refused. When the defences of the Colonies were under consideration in '87, for the third time a chance was lost of making the Army and Navy truly Imperial, and one in '90 and '94 of putting Imperial trade-relations on a sounder basis. To say that the time is not yet ripe for drawing the bonds of Empire closer has been false to fact for fifty years. But no statesman arose who was able or willing to take advantage of the opportunities which lay ready to his hand. What might have been done Lord Beaconsfield indicated in his Eastern Policy. Unhappily in South Africa his efforts were marred by Mr. Froude and Lord Carnarvon, who, with the best intentions in the world, threw back the cause of Federation for some thirty years.

XVIII

In studying Imperial history during the Queen's reign one cannot fail to see that it has run in two main currents: one, towards Disintegration, from Britain; the other, towards Unity, from Further Britain. Whether negative or positive, the whole tendency of Her Majesty's Governments, until quite recently, has been to loosen Imperial bonds, not to tighten them. Take, for instance, the withdrawal of British troops from the Colonies. The measure in itself was excellent; and no one who desires to see the Empire present a strong front to the world has ever regretted it. The sting lay in the motive which prompted it and the way it was done. To every Colonial the presence of a British Regiment in his chief city was the symbol of his connexion with the Mother Country: the outward and visible sign that he was the citizen of a great Empire. How precious it was may be gathered from the passionate remonstrances addressed by Colonial Ministries and distinguished Imperial Officers to the Home Government on the subject. But though Canada, the Australias, and New Zealand offered to pay for the regiments quartered in their midst, they

were bluntly refused, and the disinterestedness of their loyalty was called in question. Next to this reckless piece of political blundering in provoking bitterness of feeling in the Colonies were the Belgian and German Commercial Treaties, now happily things of the past. For pure folly and shortsightedness they can hardly be matched in the annals of time. Lord Salisbury says that he has failed to discover why they were ever negotiated. Any tolerably well-educated Colonial can enlighten him. They were brought into being when the Dismemberment Frenzy was at its height, and Ministers of the Crown believed that England would be stronger and richer without the Empire. The first step towards putting that theory into practice was the Belgian Treaty of '62. More striking still was the studied neglect of the Colonies, at any rate until '84. Their existence was completely ignored; and yet it is so easy to lead them by sympathy; so easy to work on a loyalty so strong and so spontaneous as theirs! Like people in a strange land, they are grateful for any sign that they are remembered at home, and proud when their successes are recognised. But sentiment is no longer a counter in British statesmanship: not because it has

ceased to influence mankind, but because British statesmanship has ceased to regard mankind in anything but an official light. That it can be turned to excellent account is proved by a letter written by Sir John Macdonald to Lord Beaconsfield, with reference to the Aylesbury speech of '79. 'Our people,' he wrote, 'say truly that this is the first occasion on which a Prime Minister of England has given prominence to Canada, her capabilities, and her future—the first time that it has been proclaimed by such high authority that England has an especial interest in Canada. . . . This is Imperialism in its best aspect, and one might well suppose that every Englishman would rejoice at the prospect held out by it and you. Yet I see that the Opposition Press in England are attacking your speech.' Even so; and so long as party is superior to patriotism, Imperial Federation will never be anything but a dream!

It is quite true that a welcome change has come over public opinion, and the Empire is no longer in any danger of being neglected. Its embodiment in the Jubilee Procession last June was a happy inspiration, which has every likelihood of being identified by posterity with the

name of Mr. Chamberlain. The denunciation of the Commercial Treaties, too, is a noteworthy event in Imperial annals. But it must be remembered that—despite such instant consequences as the institution of preferential rates by Canada and Australia, and the offer of men and ships and material from Canada and Cape Colony and Natal—neither the one nor the other is in the category of constructive statesmanship. They merely pave the way for that creative policy which must, sooner or later, be the life-work of an English Minister. If men think to bring about Imperial unity by twirling their thumbs for it, they deceive themselves. It will have to be worked for with the whole might of the Empire. It is worth the effort; for it means the noblest thing that has ever lived in the tide of times—the finished British Empire.

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